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Teachers calling it a day after decades with children

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Hoping for closure on death of Neilson, 75

THE DEATH of Black Panther serial killer Donald Neilson, who murdered heiress Lesley Whittle, will hopefully bring an "element of closure" for her family, a Midland vicar has said.

The Reverend Clive Williams, rector for Highley, near Bridgnorth, said the events of 36 years ago still remained in the minds of people in the village.

But he said he hoped Neilson's death, which was announced earlier this week, would allow Lesley's relatives to put the horrific events behind them. Neilson, 75, who was serving four life sentences died on Sunday and his inquest will was due to be opened today.

He kidnapped 17-year-old Lesley from her home in Highley in 1975, leaving a ransom demand for £50,000. Her body was eventually found in Kidsgrove, north Staffordshire.

Lesley was the daughter of George Whittle, who ran the Whittle coach company in Kidderminster. She was heiress to a substantial sum. Mr Williams, who has served as a vicar in the village for 23 years, today said: "Hopefully Neilson's death will now bring the family an element of closure."

Stuart Mackenzie, 64, the officer who helped bring Neilson's reign of terror to an end, said: "Prison was too good for him."

Council uses private eyes

PRIVATE detectives have been used twice by Dudley Council over the last year.

Bosses at the local authority say it was to check on one of their own staff and said they would only use the measure when other means had failed.

Figures released through the Freedom of Information Act show a detective has been employed in March and April this year in relation to the same investigation.

The fact-finding mission was carried out on the advice of the audit service team.

EYESORE BLOCK TO BE SUPERMARKET

A DERELICT office block in the heart of Dudley town centre will be demolished to make way for a multi-million pound supermarket.

by
Heather Large

Developers want to demolish Cavendish House in Trindle Road, which has been standing empty since 2008.

Dudley Council has been working to bring a new supermarket to the town for some time believing it would help to kick start its regeneration and create hundreds of jobs.

Under the plans, Cavendish House, which has previously been branded "an eyesore" by residents, will be knocked down.

The site, as well as neighbouring land, will be cleared and used for the development.

Site owner Cavendish Quarter Properties Limited – a subsidiary of Abstract Securities Ltd – is working with Dudley Council on the proposals.

Abstract's development director, Christopher McPherson, said the proposed development would "anchor an historic and prominent gateway into Dudley."

The firm has now begun legal discussions to acquire surrounding land.

Mr McPherson said: "We have been a landowner in Dudley for several years and we have considered various options for Cavendish House over this period."

"We are at the early stages of discussions with a number of major supermarket retailers."

Dudley Council's cabinet member for regeneration Councillor Angus Adams said: "We are very excited by the current proposal and while it must meet all of the

necessary planning policy tests, it could be a major element of the current regeneration programme in the town and would complement other schemes such as the two new Dudley College developments, the transformation of our historic market place, the Townscape Heritage Initiative and our major plans for the Castle Hill area."

Residents have been calling for Cavendish House to be knocked down for some time.

Thousands

They said the building, which can be seen by thousands of drivers along Dudley Southern Bypass each day, was an "embarrassment".

Many of the windows are boarded up or broken and it has become a target for vandals.

When plans for the town were unveiled in 2008 it was originally hoped that Cavendish House could be transformed into a hotel but the scheme never got off the ground.

It was suggested that a wing in the L-shaped building could have been converted into a 150-bedroom hotel under the Dudley Town Centre Area Development plans – a blueprint for kickstarting town's regeneration. The remainder of the space that was left would have been used for refurbished office space.

Biking in some early Christmas cheer



Bikers who use Streetbike in Halesowen on their festive hospital gifts run

A GROUP of kind-hearted bikers brought some early Christmas cheer and delivered three sackloads of toys to brighten up the festive period for poorly youngsters at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital.

Staff from Streetbike in Halesowen and some of their customers got together and dropped off the gifts in the children's ward.

They also brought along treats such as chocolates for the nurses on the ward who are looking after the youngsters to give them an early Christmas present.

The presents, which had been donated by both workers and customers, were put around the Christmas tree on the ward and.

Staff will be handing out the gifts to any children who will be staying at the hospital in the run-up to December 25.

The visit at the weekend was organised by Streetbike marketing manager Carl Dodds who said he hoped the group could make it an annual event.

Steve Ford, who runs the Wishing Well charity which is based in the children's ward, said he was grateful for the gifts that Streetbike had donated.

"It is very kind. The presents will bring a lot of happiness and smiles for the children staying on the ward over Christmas," said Mr Ford.

Earlier this month players from West Bromwich Albion football club also stopped by the children's ward to meet youngsters and deliver presents.

Row over sending in waste site proposals

CONTROVERSIAL plans for a waste processing plant in the Black Country will not be submitted until the go-ahead has been given for a £120 million eco park – angering residents concerned it will go through "as an afterthought".

The proposals for land in Coseley have sparked fears the plant will damage the area. Bosses say the waste plant will power homes and businesses at the park, which is expected to create up to 1,300 jobs on the 66-acre site between Birmingham New Road and Sedgley Road West.

Details of the waste plant have been removed from the outline application for the whole park – and will instead be submitted separately. But campaigners, who have collected a 130-name petition, say the plans should all go in together.

Carla Lavender-Ward, of Thunderbolt Way, said: "We are concerned the initial plans will be given the go-ahead on the jobs they will create and the potential for businesses, and then the waste plant will be ushered in as an afterthought."

"The developers have said that this plant is crucial to the park – so I'm worried that the council will think they must approve the plant or the park won't get built."

Campaigners fear the Energy Recovery Facility may damage the environment.

Play gear to be replaced

NEW equipment to replace swings, slides and a climbing wall stolen by metal thieves from a children's play area in Halesowen is being fitted over the Christmas holidays.

The play equipment was cut down by thieves who struck on August 30 at the play area at The Leasowes. Two swings, two slides, a climbing wall and a chain bridge were taken in total during the Bank Holiday raid at the site which is just off Mucklow Hill.

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College creation reaches milestone

THE CREATION of an £18 million new college development in Dudley has reached a major milestone with construction of its steel frame now complete.

Work started on the vocational centre, being built on the site of a former fire station in Tower Street, in February and it is expected to open to students next September.

The building, which will be known as Dudley Evolve, forms

part of a £30m university-style campus scheme by Dudley College to create a new learning quarter in the town centre.

It will house modern learning facilities for business, information technology and travel and tourism students. Now bosses have held a topping out ceremony at the site to mark the completion of the final bolt being put in the steel structure at its highest point, which was attended

by a number of students. A college spokesman said that the elements of the building are now also taking shape, including the sports hall, large enough for six badminton courts, the theatre, which seats 180 people, and the hair and beauty salon which will be open to the public.

Also progressing is the large fitness suite, which is being built behind the old fire station facade,

two dance studios and a music area that houses a recording studio.

Dudley College principal Lowell Williams said: "Now we've reached the topping out stage you can see how the development is really taking shape."

"Every time I visit the site I see how it's transforming from a steel structure into the fantastic vocational training centre we've imagined and planned."

Inventor Robert trains his eye on Jubilee show

An eccentric inventor from the Black Country is hoping to play a part in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in London next year with – a replica of a famous train.

Robert Merlyn Farwell has created a scaled-down version of the Stourbridge Lion, which was the first locomotive to run in America.

The original was built at the town's Foster and Rastick works back in 1828 and the engine earned its name from the picture of a lion's face that was painted on the front.

Mr Farwell, aged 65, spent three weeks making his replica, which also contains a glass-making furnace that he has used for displays at local events.

He has now applied to take part in a parade of more than 1,000 boats which will form a flotilla on the Thames for the jubilee on June 3.

Mr Farwell, who toils away in his self-built workshop in Parkfield Road, Stourbridge, wants to take the Lion on a boat and hold glass-blowing demonstrations.

He said: "It would be a great way to promote the skills and industry of this region and it would increase the profile of the Stourbridge Lion, which a lot of people are unaware of."

"Getting a boat shouldn't

be a problem, so I'm just hoping I get permission from the authorities," added Mr Farwell.

Mr Farwell is also planning a full-size replica of the train, which he wants to display at the end of the track in Stourbridge Town station.

He intends to erect it behind the buffer between the platforms.

Mr Farwell, a father-of-five, spends hours each day in his workshop, which he calls "Camalot Castle" – spelled that way as a nod to the difficulty he has with spelling.

Appearances

The inventor has had a varied career and some of the roles he has taken on include appearances as an extra in TV shows such as Boon in the 1980s.

Mr Farwell also set up a business called Wizard Merlyn's Costume Hire in Church Street, Stourbridge, in the same decade.

His talents also extend to magic, and he spent summer seasons in Clacton in the 1970s as a children's entertainer.

Move on marriages

THE MP for Dudley South has welcomed the launch of a Government consultation on the criminalisation of forced marriage.

It follows an announcement earlier this year by the Prime Minister that the Government would criminalise the breach of forced marriage prevention orders which block forced marriages from going ahead and protect potential victims.

MP Chris Kelly said: "I am glad this Government is examining how we can criminalise forced marriage while ensuring we do not discourage victims from coming forward. We need to completely eradicate this unacceptable crime."

Sisters enjoying a n-ice time



Sisters on skates – Bunny Hunt, aged 58, left, and Hylary Trayer, who is 68

RETIRED sisters have been showing youngsters a thing or two about skating after taking part in regular sessions on the ice at a garden centre in the Black Country.

Hylary Trayer, aged 68, and Anne "Bunny" Hunt, 58, have been showing off their skills at the rink which has opened for the festive season at Webbs in Hagley.

The pair, who live in Selly Oak in Birmingham, usually have ice dance lessons every

week at the ice rink in Birmingham but love the opportunity to skate outside. Hylary, who worked as a research bio-chemist at Birmingham University, said, "It's wonderful to skate outside, especially at Christmas time."

"It's lovely as it goes dark and the lights come on and last year on a couple of occasions it even started snowing. It even made an old lady like me feel Christmassy."

thechronicle

Library services building share bid

A LIBRARY in Wyre Forest would share its building with other services and two others would be relocated, under cost-cutting plans.

Worcestershire County Council has launched a review of its library services in a bid to save £1.8 million.

The authority is trying to make savings of £70 million by 2015.

Council bosses have now announced proposals to move other services into the Kidderminster Library building, in Market Street, to share space with the facility.

They said the move would reduce operating costs.

Plans have also emerged to relocate the existing Stourport Library, based in Worcester Street, into the town's Civic Centre and also to relocate Bewdley Library.

Members of Bewdley Town Council, the parish council and Wyre Forest District Council would be asked to identify a location the library can share with other public services. The plans were due to be discussed by Worcestershire County Council's cabinet at a meeting tonight. If they are approved the plans would go out for public consultation.

Looking for new umpires

BUDDING cricket umpires can learn new skills at a free training session at Himley Cricket Club.

North Worcestershire Cricket Development Group has organised the night at the club next Wednesday.

The cricket club's ground is in Wolverhampton Road, Himley, near Dudley.

Worcestershire umpires' training officer, Tim Granger, will be taking the session, which is aimed at players aged 16-18 and anyone else who may be asked to umpire in second and third team cricket. For further details call 07530

Thieves take gates

THIEVES are targeting metal gates across Wyre Forest. West Mercia Police say a pair of 12ft galvanised steel gates worth £1,000 were taken from a field in Drayton, near Kidderminster. Another gate was taken from a field in the same village. Contact police on 0300 333 3000.

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NEWS
in brief**Jewellery stolen in raid on home**

JEWELLERY and a camera have been stolen in a burglary in Kidderminster. The thieves broke into a property in Brookside Way, Blakedown and took a gold wedding ring worth £200, a ladies gold watch worth £120 and a Fuji F650 digital camera worth £100. The theft happened between 4.15 and 6pm on December 9.

Pc Adrian Bartlett said: "Anyone offered items for sale similar to those stolen are urged to call us." People can contact Pc Bartlett on 0300 333 3000.

Academy taking The Risk at launch

X FACTOR stars The Risk brought out the crowds to celebrate the launch of a new multi-million pound college academy in Kidderminster.

The £6.1 million centre has been created in the listed Piano Building in a former Brintons carpet warehouse in the town centre. Hundreds of fans watched the boyband perform in front of the academy. The group were voted off the show last month and member Charlie Healy, 25, said they had worked non-stop.

Planning to build homes near firm

ALMOST 100 new homes could be built on land near a landmark ceramics factory in Stourport.

Redrow Homes Midlands has lodged proposals for a mixture of two to five bedroom houses on the site by Morgan Technical Ceramics, Bewdley Road.

Some of the industrial units belonging to the factory will be demolished to make way, said Wyre Forest District Council.

Woman rescued from house fire

A MOTHER had to be rescued by firefighters after a chip pan caught fire.

A 10-year-old boy attempted to put the blaze out in North View Drive, Harts Hill, Brierley Hill.

He alerted neighbours when he failed. One cat and three dogs were also rescued from the property by crews who were at the scene for around an hour.

Safety advice

RESIDENTS can pick up advice on staying safe over Christmas and New Year from Dudley Council's home safety service. The service is asking residents to be more fire aware.

Guilty of cruelty to marmoset

A COUPLE who sold a sick pet monkey, which had been left "crippled" with fractured bones because of a poor diet, have been found guilty of animal cruelty.

Lee Powell and Julie Jones failed to ensure the four-month-old marmoset, named Mikey, was fed an appropriate diet, Dudley Magistrates Court heard.

The monkey, which was distressed and in pain, had a bone disease caused by a lack of vitamin D3 and calcium and had to be put down by the RSPCA.

Magistrates said the scientific evidence against Powell, aged 50, and Jones, 42, both of Sunderland Drive, Stourbridge, was indisputable.

They were each found guilty of two charges of causing unnecessary suffering to the marmoset and two of not taking reasonable steps to ensure the animal was fed appropriately or protected from pain, injury or suffering.

They were bailed for sentence on January 12.

During the two-day both Powell and Jones maintained they did not know there was anything wrong with the monkey and said they would have taken it to the vets if they had known there was.

Club attack man sought

POLICE are trying to track down a man after a reveller was attacked in a Midland nightclub.

The 21-year-old victim was on the dance floor at Love 2 Love in Bromsgrove when he was involved in an altercation with other men. One of the group hit him.

He sustained multiple injuries to his mouth and teeth during the attack early on November 19.

Police would like to trace a man who is white, with short dark hair and was wearing a light-coloured polo. Call PC Mark Greaves on 0300 3333000.

Store is to close

A BUDGET electrical store at Merry Hill Shopping Centre will close next month. Best Buy, which sells products from electric plugs to laptops, will cease trading on January 15 as retailer Carphone Warehouse, which owns the firm, shuts its 11 branches across the country. The Dudley Store store employs around 100.

Councils must tackle problem families – PM

COUNCILS in the West Midlands have been given two months to identify thousands of problem families as part of a £448m project to tackle neighbours from hell.

Prime Minister David Cameron was in Oldbury last week where he launched a national network of "trouble-shooters" which will aim to tackle hardcore problem families.

He revealed that there were 1,000 such families in Sandwell living on benefits and costing the taxpayer more than £75,000 a year each.

The scheme will see individuals responsible for each family and overseeing their

responsibilities. They will go into homes in the morning, making sure children are going to school, parents are able to work and insuring drug and alcohol addicts get treatment.

Unhelpful

He said the funding would lead to greater savings by tackling the estimated £9bn a year that troubled families cost the entire nation.

Speaking at the Sandwell Christian Centre Mr Cameron said: "Families see the system as faceless, intrusive and unhelpful. "We can only act if we know where trou-

bled families live. The Prime Minister went on to say: "By February we want local authorities to identify who troubled families are, where they live and the services they use."

"The next step is to get in there to help," added Mr Cameron. Mr Cameron said, however, that councils would have to fund 60 percent of the costs themselves.

It comes despite most local councils coming under pressure to make huge savings as national government funding is cut. But the Prime Minister said he was determined to "get to grips" with the prob-

lems that families face and that the project would "make a real difference in homes and neighbourhoods across the city". Mr Cameron added: "We're not prescribing a single response. But we are demanding results from councils in return for support."

Contact

For many of the most troubled families, there will be a family worker – a single point of contact for the first time for particular families. Dudley South Conservative MP Chris Kelly was in the audience and said: "I am very much looking forward to seeing this begin in Dudley."

Paratrooper who shook his son to death is sent to jail

A PARATROOPER who momentarily lost control and violently shook his baby son causing him severe brain injuries has started a five-year jail term for manslaughter.

Jonathan James, aged 25, was found guilty of unlawfully killing five-month-old Theo Davies at a flat in the Midlands. The jury took nearly eight hours to reach their verdict.

It came after a four-week trial at Worcester Crown Court. James' family gasped as the verdict was delivered in court.

The hearing had to be momentarily suspended after a man hurled abuse at the judge and jury. Mr Justice Butterfield ordered the public gallery be cleared after the outburst.

James, of MoD St Athan, Barry, in the Vale of Glamorgan, hung his head and showed no emotion as the sentence was passed.

Mr Justice Butterfield said there was much evidence to suggest James had been a caring father but something had "simply snapped" on that day.

Little Theo had been left in the care of his father at a flat in Old Ford Walk, Stourport, while his mother, Leanne Davies, popped out to buy milk on August 24, 2009.

When she returned minutes later she saw Theo

lying lifeless on the bed and a panicking James calling the emergency services.

The baby was rushed first to Worcester Royal Hospital and then to Birmingham Children's Hospital where he died the following day.

Post mortems revealed he had suffered severe bleeding in and around the brain which they concluded had been caused by a trauma.

James claimed he had found his son having a fit and said he could not remember what happened next.

Mr Christopher Hotton QC, defending, said: "It was a single incident stemming from a momentary loss of self-control."

Mr Justice Butterfield told James: "Little Theo, who I have no doubt you cared for deeply, is dead and that is because you killed him. That is something you will have to live with."

Theo's mother said she would never forgive her ex-partner for what he had done.

Leanne Davies, the boy's mother and James' former girlfriend, said the most precious thing in her life had been taken away.



Youngster James Van Veen, a pupil at Church of the Ascension Primary School, with his winning design. He receives his prize from sponsor Sandra Walters from ND Walters and Headteacher Richard Green



Chronicle advertising sales supervisor Emma Parkes, left, presents Joel England, aged six, with his prize, with staff Miss White, centre, and Mrs Duckworth at Blackheath Primary School.

Chronicle Christmas design winners on the cards

CREATIVE youngsters received an early Christmas present when they were announced as winners of this year's Chronicle Christmas card competition.

James Van Veen, a pupil at Church of the Ascension Primary School, New Street, Wall Heath scooped first

prize in the Dudley edition of the competition, while Blackheath Primary School pupil Joel England won the Halesowen version. The boys had their designs framed with their names printed at the bottom, while the two schools received cheques for £50 after Chronicle readers had voted

for their favourites. Sandra Walters, of ND Walters which sponsored the Dudley competition, presented James with his prize alongside Church of the Ascension headteacher Richard Green. She said: "James was delighted to win and he fully deserved it for such an excellent design."

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THE BEST
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RHODES

OUR local carol service gets worse with every passing year. While we have come to accept all manner of strange carols from around the world, this is the first service I have attended where the carol sheet included Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. For, lo, it is written: 'He'll go down in history.'

□□□□□□□□

MAKES you proud to be British, doesn't it? I refer to the Yuletide fad for furry hats in the shape of lions, tigers, rabbits, frogs and so on. There are not many nations with the casual self-confidence to wander the streets looking like refugees from Regent's Park. You don't see chic Parisians sashaying down the Boulevard St Michel with a toad sur la tete. Come to think if it, the French never warmed to the shell suit, either. They miss so much.

□□□□□□□□

THIS time last year I suggested light-heartedly that 2011 would see the reappearance of the Deutschmark. It hasn't happened. But it is surprising how many websites are buzzing with rumours that Deutschmark Two is being printed.

□□□□□□□□

RESEARCH shows that one of the most frequently asked questions on the internet in 2011 was: "What is scampi?" To which the answer is: "Whatever the restaurant thinks it can get away with." Curiously, that perennial Yuletide question does not even figure in this research, namely: "Is mulled wine alcoholic?"

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Fuel costs sees rise in people taking to bikes

CYCLING clubs are seeing membership numbers soaring as more and more people are ditching their cars to saddle up and take to the roads on their bicycles.

The popularity of the sport is on the rise as more people look at using cheaper modes of transport amid soaring prices at the petrol pumps.

They are also looking at the other benefits such as getting fit at the same time.

Cycle shop owners including Kevin Anson who runs Lower Gornal-based repair business Pedal Sense, in Ruiton Street, said over recent months they had seen an increase in the numbers of people who are taking up cycling.

The 45-year-old said: "A lot of people are coming into the shop and saying they are taking up cycling because of it's costing too much to run

car. "They are using their bikes because of the cost of fuel."

"I think the Olympics next year will also cause more people to take up cycling."

Wolverhampton Wheelers Cycling Club, which is based at Aldersley Stadium, has seen its membership jump from 300 to 350 this year alone.

Vice president Robin Kyte said: "We now have 350 members, which is the biggest the club has ever been. We saw a big increase after the Beijing games and I'm sure we will see another increase next year with the London Olympics."

Safety scheme for oldies

A **SAFETY** scheme for older people has been out and about in Halesowen, offering advice and support.

The Living Well, Feeling Safe scheme provides practical tips for older people aiming to make sure they are safe and secure at home. It is a partnership made up of Dudley Council, Age UK, West Midlands Police, Victim Support and West Midlands Fire Service. Staff from the scheme were recently out visiting homes in the Short Cross area of Halesowen as well as offering a drop-in service at Short Cross Methodist Church. The living well, feeling safe service offers free home assessments and advice to all older people, across Dudley borough. The service can be contacted on 01384 817743.

Student is mastering golf



Student Kathryn Brookes, aged 17, who is proving to be a natural at golf

A **SPORTS** student has mastered the art of golf and has got her skill off to a tee by playing golf for Staffordshire county.

Kathryn Brookes, who is a second year BTEC Extended Diploma Level 3 student at Stourbridge College plays golf for Penn Golf Club but also plays for the county as vice captain for county girls.

She is hoping to become captain at the end

of the year. The 17-year-old from Lower Gornal, has been playing golf for four years and has competed in various competitions including the 2011 Midland Junior Champion of Champions.

She said: "My handicap is seven, which is good considering I've only been playing for four years. My dad got me into the sport while we were on holiday."

16 Arrests in day of action by officers

SIXTEEN arrests were made in the Midlands during a day of action against suspected drugs crimes, assaults and bail-dodgers. Police turned up at homes in North Worcester-shire.

The arrests were made under a wider operation on the West Mercia patch.

Four arrests were made in total in Wyre Forest – three on drugs offences and one for failing to answer bail.

Two men were arrested at a property in Broad Street on suspicion of possessing Class A drugs.

Elsewhere in Wyre Forest police went to a house in Windsor Drive, Kidderminster, and arrested a man who was wanted on warrant. He was taken to Kidderminster Magistrates Court. Another man was arrested in the town at Gould Avenue East during the execution of a drugs warrant obtained under the Misuse of Drugs Act. The man, who is in his 30s, was cautioned after he was found with cannabis.

Evening of soul

SOUL fans can enjoy an evening of classic hits performed by a popular band at a concert in Dudley. Soul Survivors will take to the stage at Dudley Concert Hall, St James's Road, on February 11 from 7.30pm. Tickets for the show are £13 from Dudley Box Office. It will feature songs by Otis Redding.



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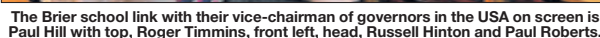
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The 30-year-old pony got trapped in fencing as a result of the fall, which happened in Vicarage Road, Clent.

THE great-great-grandson of Charles Dickens will perform some of the writer's best stories in Dudley. Gerald Dickens will be appearing at Netherton Arts Centre on February 27. Tickets for the event, which starts at 1.30pm, cost £10 per adult or £6 for children. Call 01384 813943.

Natalie, of Thornleigh, Lower Gornal, went missing on September 1, 2003, when she left her home to go to a shop. Anyone who has any information can call police on 0845 113 5000.



Headteacher Russell Hinton said they had carried out a dummy-run the previous week to ensure all of the technology was in place.

The firm wanted to change the times so lorries could enter and leave the site before the main rush-hour traffic.



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LETTERS

Size matters over Parliament

PAT McFadden quite rightly argues that Local Community identity is a key issue in looking at the way we wish to be seen and democratically represented.

What we are missing in this debate is the need to fundamentally question the functions and therefore the composition and size of Westminster Parliament; what is best dealt with at the regional, the local and national levels.

What is the case for 600 or 200 MPs? It's argued we still need 600 so that all constituencies are roughly the same size in terms of voters and that they maintain the local link. Clearly not all

constituencies will generate the same amount of local work and more fundamentally we need to question why members of the Parliament should be spending much of their time and tax payers resources on local issues.

We all know that people do not stay still, they move around and the populations of local areas go up and down.

It is inevitable with the approach proposed that boundaries will continually have to be revised.

So much for the argument that the link between MPs and the local is paramount.

With Scotland, Wales, Northern

Ireland and more especially London, well down the devolution track with more to come, the functions of Westminster and its size and costs have to be questioned. We are in sight of Westminster becoming, on domestic matters, a wholly English Parliament with decisions about policies in Newcastle, Penzance and Dudley all being taken in London or by its agents. England is too complex for this approach to be sustainable and any outcomes, rather than numbers an alternative is needed.

GEORGE MORRAN
Woodsetton
Dudley

A festive greeting to knights of the road

I WOULD like to say a great big Christmas thank you to the two gentlemen who stopped to assist us on Saturday December 10 near to Essington Fruit Farm, when we had a puncture on our car.

We tried for nearly an hour to see if it would inflate with the compressor, all to no avail, but when it came to replacing it with the spare wheel, my husband could not get the punctured wheel off the car, I was just about to phone for assistance when the two gentlemen stopped.

Needless to say we were very cold, but all thanks to two gentlemen's help in replacing the wheel we got home safely. So with our thanks and best wishes, we hope they have an enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

MR & MRS T A JORDAN
Peartree Lane
Coseley

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

Halesowen Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial, 51-53
Queen Street, Wolverhampton
WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

dudleychrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Nothing funny about Royal Variety show

WHILE at a loss for anything better to do, I foolishly decided to watch the Royal Variety performance show on TV for the first time in years.

What a show it turned out to be. It was compered (if one can describe such antics as being a comper) by Peter Kay. He seemed to wander aimlessly on and off the stage holding a handful of cards on which were written the names and descriptions of each of the "acts" he was about to introduce.

We were treated to a sombre-faced seemingly endless procession of so-called comedians, the best of which was about as humorous as a dental appointment involving root canal surgery. I quickly slipped into a state of deep melancholia thinking back to the halcyon days of the likes of Bob Hope, Jack Benny, Milton Berle, Danny Kaye; of our own Jimmy Tarbuck, Tommy Cooper Morecambe and Wise, The Two Ronnies, who could ever forget Freddy Starr's Hilarious send up of Mick Jagger?

All in all I think the show was an abysmal failure.

B PARSONS,
Coseley

Consider other dog walkers in public

FOR the past six months a friend of mine has enjoyed walking her entire male puppy over a nearby common.

However, these daily walks have recently been spoiled owing to the thoughtless actions of another dog walker. Someone has persisted in walking their bitch, who is in season, off the lead on the common.

My friend has been asked to "call her dog", who is being a 'nuisance' to this owner's animal, I wonder why. It is irresponsible to walk a bitch in season, off the lead, in a public place, where dogs are also exercised. Do they not know that male dogs can detect her scent for long distances?

One inconsiderate dog owner can spoil it for the majority.
JACKIE WORTON
Brierley Hill

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Refugee who made his mark in sports world dies, aged 83

A GREAT-GRANDFATHER who fled the post-World War Two Communist regime in Yugoslavia to work down the mines, later setting up home in Stourbridge, has died, aged 83.

Alexander Fojan and brother George "grabbed everything they had" before setting off to Britain in 1948, agreeing to work in oppressive conditions at the Jubilee Colliery in West Bromwich and mines in Cannock in exchange for asylum. He married wife Joan in 1954 and the couple moved to Pedmore in 1959.

A talented sportsman, he was a well-known face around the pubs of Stourbridge and beyond as a regular dominoes and darts player.

Mrs Fojan said he would buy anyone a drink and was always first to put his hand

in his pocket. "That's just the way he was," she said. "He worked hard and played hard."

"He was just the most wonderful husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather that anyone could ever wish for. He had an absolute heart of gold and we will all miss him terribly."

Mr Fojan, who also leaves three children, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, died at Russells Hall Hospital on December 1 after a long illness.

A keen West Bromwich Albion fan who had trials with Stoke City on his arrival in the county, he was also one of the region's top table-tennis players.

Mrs Fojan, of Cherry Tree Court, Pedmore, said despite her husband's Yugoslavian heritage he was more patriotic than she was.

'Dudley Dorito' is spotted

A mysterious triangular UFO dubbed the Dudley Dorito has reappeared in the region's skies with the latest sighting reported near a beauty spot.

Property worker Gary Nock and his family were on the car park of the Badgers Sett pub, Hagley, when they saw the distinctive object flying overhead.

The 52-year-old said that the UFO, a black triangle with white lights at each corner, was flying at low altitude and coming from the direction of Birmingham.

He said the object had turned silently in the air and they had eventually lost sight of it as it passed over the Clent Hills.

The sighting occurred at around 6.40pm on December 14 and Mr Nock immediately looked it up information about it on the internet when he returned home.

And he said the UFO bore a close resemblance to the "Dudley Dorito" which was first spotted over the skies of the Black Country a few years ago.

Mr Nock said he, his wife Susan, daughter Claire and her boyfriend Jamie Burgoyne had just arrived at the pub to have a meal.

"We were just getting out of the car when we saw this object overhead. It was very low in the sky and could easily be seen," he said.

Aircraft

"At first I thought it could have been a jet but no aircraft has those types of lights to my knowledge."

"It banked to the one side and made no sound whatsoever which was also strange."

"It was so low we lost sight of it over the tree line of the Clent Hills."

"When we got back Jamie and I looked it up on

the internet and saw the stories about the Dudley Dorito and what we saw does bear a resemblance to it."

Mr Nock said that he believed the craft could be an military plane that is in the experimental stages.

"I know about planes but have never seen anything like this."

"It does look a little like a B2 stealth plane but that makes a sound this one did not. It is a mystery."

It is the latest in a long list of sightings over the Black Country which have been reported over the last few years.

The UFO was last seen earlier this year by security officer Glyn Richards while in the back garden of his home in Quarry Bank.

The alleged UFO has also been spotted over several other areas of the Black Country including Tipton, Brierley Hill and Oldbury.

Centre hits 25 years



Members with the mayor, councillor Michael Evans, left, treasurer Robert Chesworth and chairman Dennis Eaves

THE history of a well-used community centre is being honoured, as part of the celebrations to mark its 25th anniversary.

Sedgley Community Centre opened in 1986 as a focal point for the town to host all manner of events and activities.

The association which runs the centre, in Ladies Walk, invited the Mayor of Dudley and Sedgley councillor Michael Evans to enjoy a community day and to help mark the milestone.

Past memories, anecdotes and stories have been retold by members of the Sedgley and District Community Association in a booklet which they have produced to mark the occasion.

A choir from Dormston School and the St Andrews Singers performed at the event for more than 100 visitors. Centre management committee chairman Dennis Eaves, aged 78, said everyone was delighted with how the celebrations went.

Council is planning to freeze tax rates

COUNCIL tax rates in Wyre Forest could be frozen next year under new proposals. The move is set to be discussed at a meeting of the district council's cabinet and if agreed it will be the second year in a row the district council's element of the tax has not been increased.

Councils have been awarded a grant from the government equivalent to a 2.5 per cent council tax increase if they freeze the levy on residents.

Councillor Nathan Desmond of Wyre Forest district council, said: "We have seen a drop in income and we are well aware that residents are finding this a difficult time too."

"I am pleased that we are able to secure a freeze in the district council's element of the council tax for 2012-13, by using the grant that the Government is offering."

"This does however create difficulties because the grant is only for one year and will therefore permanently reduce council tax income." Dudley Council has yet to announce

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Free parking scrapped

FREE parking for disabled visitors has been scrapped at Kidderminster Hospital after bosses agreed to press ahead with the scheme.

Signs which are displayed at the site are now being altered to inform visitors to the hospital of the changes.

But campaigners have criticised bosses for the charges just before Christmas saying there was no official announcement.

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust announced the plans to axe free disabled parking in September but said no final decision had been made.

Health bosses said they were now looking to

offer help to anyone struggling to pay the charges.

Mark Lawley, of Disability Action Wyre Forest, today said he was shocked to find signs saying blue badge holders can park for free had been scrubbed out.

Smaller signs informing people that charges apply to everyone have now been put in place on the site.

Publicised

He said: "These charges are pure greed and it doesn't seem fair that they have been introduced so close to Christmas."

"This has not been widely publicised and no announcement has been made."

Charges will also be introduced at Redditch's

Alexandra Hospital and Worcestershire Royal in Worcester.

The trust argues that money raised from car parking – which already brings in more than £1 million a year – goes towards providing front-line services.

Trust spokeswoman Janet-Marie Clark said: "Campaigners were aware of the plans and knew a decision was due to be made later this year."

Chris Tidman, acting chief executive for the trust, said the charges "will ensure that we can continue to cover the cost of providing car parking infrastructure in as fair a way as possible, as well as ensuring that any surplus income we receive will help to support front line care."

Borough bucking trend as jobless figures keep rising

DUDLEY and the Black Country is bucking the trend in the face of latest grim unemployment figures, which have revealed a record number of people out of work.

Jobless queues fell slightly in the borough.

They were down by 95 in Dudley last month and numbers also fell in the neighbouring areas of Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Walsall.

It comes as new figures reveal the country's total of people who are out of work has increased by 128,000 to 2.64 million – a 17-year high.

Across the West Midlands as a whole, unemployment has risen by 4,000 to 243,000.

The regional unemployment rate is now

9.2 per cent, compared to a national average of 8.3 per cent.

Nationwide, the jobless total is now worse than at any time since 1994.

A series of grim figures delivered an additional pre-Christmas blow to the Government, with youth and female unemployment showing big rises and the number of people claiming jobseeker's allowance increasing for the ninth month in a row.

Unemployment among 16 to 24-year-olds increased by 54,000 to 1.03m, the highest since records began in 1992.

The Office for National Statistics also reported that women's unemployment has increased by 45,000 and now stands at 1.1m.

Two take retirement



Sue Homer and Angela Newton with pupils at The Kingswinford School

TWO teachers who have chalked up decades between them are preparing to bid a fond farewell to pupils and colleagues as they retire.

Sue Homer and Angela Newton are leaving The Kingswinford School. Mrs Homer, aged 60, has taught PE at the school since 1972 and has also organised a range of extra-curricular sports and activities, including the netball and hockey teams.

She said some of her fondest memories were of the cruises and skiing trips she enjoyed with staff and students.

After retiring she hopes to spend more time with her family and is looking forward to having more opportunities to navigate her barge on the waterways.

Her friend, Mrs Newton, 55, has been a member of the English department since 1991 and head of year 10 for five years.

She said one of the highlights of her time at the school was leading the production of Pirates of Penzance in the early 1990s. She also ran two school magazines, as well as organising a series of residential trips to Ingestre Hall in Stafford.

Safari park offering seasonal job spots

AROUND 250 seasonal jobs are up for grabs at West Midlands Safari Park in Bewdley.

Hundreds of hopefuls were expected to apply for the positions on offer as the recruitment drive got under way last week.

Jobs on offer include catering and shop assistants, games supervisors, amusement ride operators as well as positions working in the animal reserves.

A further 250 jobs will also be available in July when the park increases its seasonal staff for the peak season. Michelle Gale, the park's human resources manager, said the roles offered flexible hours.

She added: "We will be gathering job applications between Christmas and the New Year break, ready to start the interviewing process in January 2012."

The park will fully open for its new season on February 11. Visit www.wmsp.co.uk/jobs



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Black Country Living Museum's Fiona Carding looks at how the region's families would have celebrated Christmas in the 1900s.

IF YOU'RE having to tighten your purse strings this Christmas then spare a thought for your great-grandparents who would have worked up until lunchtime on Christmas Day and would have been lucky to find an orange and a piece of coal at the bottom of their stocking.

Children were at the centre of the festive celebrations, as they are now, but festivities focused on food rather than giving presents.

Many mothers started paying a penny a week into the sweet shop 12 weeks before Christmas, putting aside sweets for children's stockings.

These would have included things like sugar mice and pigs, sugar fancies, sticks of rainbow rock and liquorice pipes.

Turkey, tinsel and all the trimmings were off the menu in a typical Black Country household and instead a good plump cockerel, roast rabbit or pork from home-reared pigs would be the special



by Fiona Carding

meal of the day. Chicken or pork would be hung on a rotisserie in front of the range oven fire and the dripping fat would be caught in a tray below.

Some of the fat would be used for gravy and the rest would be saved for pastry making and to spread on bread for sandwiches.

The meat would be served with homegrown potatoes and vegetables in season.

Preparations

The first preparations for Christmas would be the Christmas pudding which would be made on Stir-Up Sunday (the last Sunday of Advent).

It would be made with plums, possibly a few sultanas, suet, eggs and spices like nutmeg and cinnamon.

A spiced-up version of bread pudding was used as a cheap substitute for Christmas pudding.

Families would put a sixpence (2.5p) or threepenny bit (1.5p) inside the pudding for luck.

Few working class families had a Christmas tree in the early 1900s. Instead decorations were made of holly or wooden hoops from butter barrels and trimmed with coloured paper.

Bundles of chocolate were hung on the 'tree', but were supposedly not to be eaten until after Twelfth Night.

Christmas was far less commercial and more charitable too. Year-round donations from community members and benevolent trusts ensured even the poorest in society weren't forgotten.

In 1904, Christmas in West Bromwich Workhouse began with carols played on a gramophone and breakfast served in the decorated dining hall, followed by a Christmas service conducted by the chaplain.

Gifts were provided including a Christmas letter to each inmate and sweets, crackers and pennies for children.

Visit www.bclm.com for further information.



Margaret Millington steams the Christmas pudding over the range



A Christmas party at Smethwick's Rolfe Street Baths



WM Pugh Butchers, in Smethwick, displaying a feast of festive food



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CLUB NEWS

thechronicle

Christmas charity at meeting

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL W'TON

WOLVERHAMPTON club members gathered for their Christmas meeting recently. As keen supporters of The Haven, the Women and Children's Refuge in Wolverhampton, members are encouraged to bring along gifts for the children and their mothers who the Haven is supporting. This year was no exception and a great number of presents were brought along.

A member of the Haven staff, Grace Lee attended the meeting to collect the items and thanked members very warmly for their generosity. As well as gift for the Haven, members brought along tinned goods, socks and blankets for passing on to the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd.

The Good Shepherd Ministry in Wolverhampton provides food on a daily basis for those who are hungry.

The Little Brothers also has a drop-in centre providing for the needs of any disadvantaged or lonely people looking for support.

In addition, the Ministry distributes around 1,500 Christmas hampers each year for families in need in Wolverhampton and the surrounding areas.

The evening included some popular entertainment - ukulele playing and singing by Matthew Richards.

President Julia brought the evening to a close by wishing everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Party pledge for hospital donation



A group of Sedgley Evening Guild's arts and crafts section wrapped in the blankets knitted for the Addis Ababa Hospital

THE arts and crafts group is continuing knitting blankets to donate to the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, along with producing other craft items, and members had a very successful open day recently.

The guild also had a very good Christmas party with delicious food supplied by all the members.

SEDGLEY EVENING GUILD

The walking group is still enjoying its walks around the local countryside, especially during the recent good autumn weather.

The next meeting will be in January when the group meets on the third Monday at 7.15pm at Sedgley Community Centre.

Festive fare for members

THE Christmas meeting was held at the Kingfisher Hotel, Wall Heath, when chairman Jean Corns welcomed 45 members and three visitors.

Ben the young new, chef and the friendly efficient staff were thanked for the excellent food and service received over the year, and everyone received a gift of a box of chocolates.

Speaker Keith Cheetham talked about the life of

DUDLEY SOUTH LADIES LUNCHEON CLUB

Charles Dickens and read passages from several of his books.

The group is now looking forward to 2012 and the new programme being arranged by Pauline Handley.

On January 13, the speaker will be Ian Nex of

Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

The annual general meeting will be held on February 10, and on March 9, John Clews from the RSPB will give a talk.

Following the success of the visit to Cheltenham in November, arrangements are in hand for another coach outing in the spring.

For more details on the club, call the secretary on 01902 372984.

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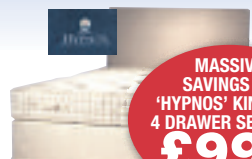


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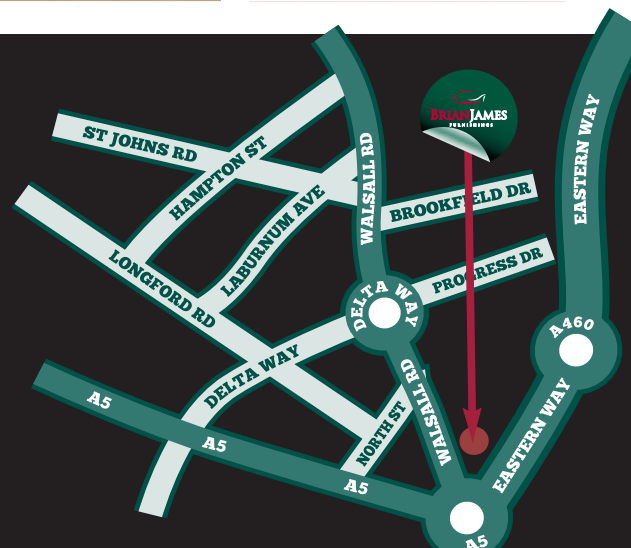
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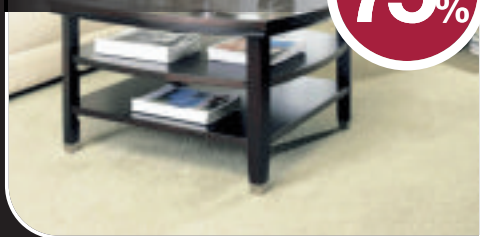
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6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Nativity. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.15** Nigel Slater's Simple Christmas. (R) **12.15** BBC News: Regional News; Weather. **12.30** Keeping Up Appearances. (R) **1.30** Film: The Santa Clause 2. (2002) Disney comedy adventure sequel, starring Tim Allen. **3.05** Film: G-Force. (2009) Premiere. Children's adventure, starring Bill Nighy. **4.30** BBC News: Regional News; Weather. **4.50** Winter Wipeout Christmas Special. **5.50** Film: The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. (2005) Fantasy adventure, starring Tilda Swinton.

8.00 Merlin. Part two of two. Camelot has fallen to Morgana, leaving Arthur a broken man, and Merlin realises only an extraordinary act will restore his master's faith. Last in the series.

8.45 EastEnders. Masood and Zainab try to stop Yusuf's plan.

9.20 Outnumbered. The Brockmans plan to escape the festivities to spend Christmas in the sun – but Grandad ends up in hospital. Karen gets toothache and Ben develops a fascination with knives.

10.00 Lapland. Festive comedy drama, starring Sue Johnston.

11.15 The National Lottery Saturday Night Draws.

11.25 BBC News: Weather.

11.45 Midnight Mass from St George's Cathedral Southwark. Led by Archbishop Peter Smith; National Lottery Update.

12.55 Film: At First Sight. (1999) Romantic drama, starring Val Kilmer and Mira Sorvino. **2.55** Weatherview. **3.00** BBC News.

6.00 CBeebies. **7.00** CBBC. **8.50** Film: Jump In! (2007) Drama, starring Corbin Bleu. **10.10** Film: Bicentennial Man. (1999) Sci-fi drama, with Robin Williams. **12.10** Film: Homeward Bound II: Lost in San Francisco. (1996) Animal adventure sequel, with the voice of Michael J Fox. **1.35** Pappano's Essential Tosca. **2.35** Tosca from the Royal Opera House. **4.45** Christmas University Challenge. **5.15** Dad's Army. (R) **5.45** Carols from King's.

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7.00 The John Craven Years. Documentary charting the TV presenter's career, which has spanned 40 years. Featuring interviews with Jon Culshaw, Noel Edmonds and Martin Bell.

8.00 Morecambe and Wise. Memorable moments from the comedy duo's Christmas shows. (R)

9.00 The Many Faces of Les Dawson. Profile of the Manchester-born comedian.

10.00 The Best of Les Dawson. Tribute to the comedian. (R)

10.25 Top of the Pops 2: Christmas Special. (R)

11.55 Blackadder Rides Again. (R)

12.55 Never Mind the Buzzcocks. (R) **1.25** Film: Holiday in Handcuffs. (2007) Romantic comedy, starring Melissa Joan Hart and Mario Lopez. **2.50** Close.

6.00 CITV: Mini CITV. **7.25** CITV. **8.15** Film: Tom and Jerry: The Magic Ring. (2002) Premiere. Animated comedy, with the voice of Jeff Bennett. **9.25** Film: Santa Claus: The Movie. (1985) Family fantasy adventure, with Dudley Moore. **11.30** Coronation Street. **1.25** ITV News: Weather. **1.45** Film: The Polar Express. (2004) Animated adventure, with the voice of Tom Hanks. **3.35** Film: ET: The Extra-Terrestrial. (1982) Sci-fi fantasy, with Henry Thomas. **5.45** ITV News: Weather.

6.00 You've Been Framed! Christmas Special. Festive foul-ups. (R)

6.30 The Cube Celebrity Special. With Coronation Street stars Ryan Thomas and Julie Hesmondhalgh.

7.30 Text Santa. Part two of two. The charity initiative concludes.

10.00 Piers Morgan's Life Stories: Donny Osmond. The singer talks about his life and career.

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11.00 ITV News: Weather.

11.15 Carols from Bucklebury.

12.15 Film: Connie and Carla. (2004) Two women flee after witnessing a murder and plan to lie low by posing as drag queens on the Los Angeles gay scene. Comedy, starring Toni Collette and Nia Vardalos. **ITV News** Headlines. **2.10** Film: Spartacus. (1960) Roman epic, with Kirk Douglas. **5.20** ITV Nightscreen.

7.15 Film: Garfield. (2004) Family comedy, with the voice of Bill Murray. **8.45** Olive, the Other Reindeer. (R) **9.40** Prep & Landing. (R) **10.10** Film: Charlotte's Web. (2006) Family drama, with the voice of Julia Roberts. **12.00** Film: The Muppet Christmas Carol. (1992) Comedy, with Michael Caine and Steven Mackintosh alongside the puppet characters. **1.40** Gordon's Christmas Cookalong – Get Ready. (R) **1.50** Jamie's Christmas with Bells On. (R) **2.55** Jamie's Christmas with Bells On. (R) **4.00** Deal or No Deal: Deal Panto. **5.00** Come Dine with Me Extra Portions. (R) **5.30** Come Dine with Me Extra Portions. (R)

6.00 Come Dine with Me Extra Portions. (R)

6.30 Come Dine with Me Extra Portions. (R)

7.00 Channel 4 News. **7.05** 4thought.tv.

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7.15 FILM: Hairspray. (2007) **9.20** Home for the Holidays. **10.55** Bill Bailey: Dandelion Mind.

11.55 Father Ted Christmas Special. (R)

1.05 Music on 4: Inputoutput. (R) **1.15** Comedy Lab: Kabadassas. **1.45** Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows – T4 Movie Special. (R) **2.00** Cee Lo Takes the UK: Christmas with All the Goodies. (R) **2.10** Film: Ashes of Time Redux. (1994) Wong Kar-Wai's drama, starring Leslie Cheung. **3.45** Southland. **4.30** World War II: The Last Heroes. (R) **5.25** Brothers & Sisters. (R)

6.00 Milkshake! **10.15** Chef Donald. (R) **10.20** ThunderCats. **10.55** Meerkat Manor. (R) **11.25** Ice Road Truckers: Deadliest Roads. (R) **12.25** Charley Boorman's Extreme Frontiers. (R) **1.30** Cars Toons. **1.35** Film: Mrs Miracle. (2009) **3.25** Film: Meet the Santas. (2005) Fantasy comedy sequel, with Steve Guttenberg. **5.05** Film: Scrooge – A Christmas Carol. (1951) Charles Dickens' fantasy, starring Alastair Sim.

7.00 Eddie Stobart's Christmas Delivery. Festive edition of the documentary series, in which the company's trucks battle winter conditions to ensure shops and councils receive their supply of Christmas trees and salt.

7.55 5 News Weekend.

8.00 The Gadget Show Christmas Eve Special. Suzi Perry investigates 4G communications, Jason Bradbury examines products due to hit the shops in 2012, and Jon Bentley views an advanced helmet designed for fighter-jet pilots.

9.00 Greatest Christmas TV Moments. Countdown of 50 Christmas TV crackers, featuring Gavin & Stacey, Morecambe and Wise, Only Fools and Horses, Wallace and Gromit, Doctor Who, Top of the Pops and The Royle Family.

12.00 SuperCasino. **4.00** Great Artists. (R) **4.25** Divine Designs. (R) **4.50** Rough Guide to Beaches. **5.00** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.10** The Milkshake! Show. (R) **5.35** Thomas & Friends. (R) **5.45** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

ITV2
3.15 Aladdin **4.45** Jack and the Beanstalk **6.15** Film: The Scorpion King (2002) **8.00** Film: Nanny McPhee (2005) **10.00** Celebrity Juice: Christmas Special **11.00** Film: The Bourne Identity (2002)

ITV3
2.35 A Christmas Carol **4.05** Christmas Lights **5.30** The Darling Buds of May **6.45** Agatha Christie's Poirot **9.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **11.00** Film: Santa Claus: The Movie (1985)

ITV4
4.00 Film: The 'Burbis (1989) **6.00** Film: Dragnet (1987) **8.10** Film: Jaws: The Revenge (1987) **10.00** Film: Demolition Man (1993)

BBC THREE
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes 2011: Not in 3D **8.00** Top Gear **9.20** Film: Son of Rambow (2008) **10.50** EastEnders **11.20** Family Guy

BBC FOUR
7.00 Timeshift: The Golden Age of Trams – A Streetcar Named Desire. A history of trams in Britain, exploring why they became popular in cities and towns at the start of the 20th century — and discovering why some areas have reintroduced them. **8.00** The Pharaoh Who Conquered the Sea **9.00** Film: Land of the Pharaohs (1955) **10.40** Timeshift: Epic – A Cast of Thousands! **11.40** The Doris Day Special

E4
3.35 Sorority Girls **4.40** Desperate Scousewives **5.40** Scrubs **6.35** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** How I Met Your Mother **8.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** The World's Greatest Prankster **11.05** Film: Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan (2006)

FILM4
3.25 The Thirty-Nine Steps (1959) **5.15** My Neighbour Totoro (1988) **7.00** The Spiderwick Chronicles (2008) **9.00** Star Trek (2009) **11.20** Bronson (2008)

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9.00am - 12:00pm (Northfield, Cradley Heath, Edgbaston)

Sunday 25th December (Christmas Day) All branches are closed

Monday 26th December (Boxing Day) 10:00am - 4:00pm (Halesowen)
Northfield, Cradley Heath, Edgbaston - Closed

Tuesday 27th December (Bank Holiday) 10:00am - 4:00pm
Northfield, Cradley Heath, Edgbaston - Closed

Wednesday 28th December - Normal working hours at all branches

Thursday 29th December - Normal working hours at all branches

Friday 30th December - Normal working hours at all branches

Saturday 31st December - (New Years Eve) 9.00am - 5:00pm (Halesowen)
9.00am - 12:00pm (Northfield, Cradley Heath, Edgbaston)

Sunday 1st January 2012 (New Years Day) 10:00am - 2:00pm (Halesowen)
Northfield, Cradley Heath, Edgbaston - Closed

Monday 2nd January 2012 (Bank Holiday) 10:00am - 4:00pm (Halesowen)
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6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Nativity. (R) **10.00** Christmas Day. (R) **11.00** Songs of Praise. (R) **12.00** Morecambe and Wise. (R) **12.25** BBC News: Weather. **12.35** Film: Kung Fu Panda. (2008) Animated comedy, with the voice of Jack Black. **2.00** Top of the Pops Christmas 2011. **3.00** The Queen. (2009) Premiere. Animated sci-fi comedy, with the voice of Reese Witherspoon. **4.35** BBC News: Weather. **4.50** Film: Ratatouille. (2007) Premiere. Pixar animated comedy, with the voice of Patton Oswalt.

6.30 The Gruffalo's Child. **7.00** Doctor Who. The Time Lord helps a wartime widow and her children realise their dreams.

8.00 Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special 2011. With Barry McGuigan, Su Pollard, Simon Webbe, Debra Stephenson and Charlie Brooks.

9.00 EastEnders. Hour-long episode. Masood sets out to bring Kamil home, but Yusef has one more trick to play. Shirley is shocked to discover the identity of Phil's stalker.

10.00 Absolutely Fabulous. **10.30** Michael McIntyre's Christmas Comedy Roadshow.

11.30 BBC News: Weather. **11.45** On Christmas Night. **11.50** Have I Got a Bit More News for You. (R)

12.30 The Graham Norton Show Christmas Special. (R) **1.35** Film: The Hot Chick. (2002) Body-swap comedy, starring Rob Schneider. **3.10** Weatherview. **3.15** BBC News.

6.00 CBeebies. **7.10** CBBC. **9.35** Film: The Magic Roundabout. (2005) Animated adventure, with the voice of Ian McKellen. **10.50** Film: The Sword in the Stone. (1963) Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Ricky Sorenson. **12.10** Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. (R) **2.10** A Musical Nativity with John Rutter. **3.10** The Prince and the Composer.



(R) **4.40** Dad's Army. (R) **5.10** Porridge. (R) **5.50** The Queen. Her Majesty's annual address to the nation and the Commonwealth. (R)

6.00 Christmas University Challenge. The first semi-final of the festive quiz.

6.30 Darcy Bussell Dances Hollywood. The former Royal Ballet star celebrates classic dance musicals.

8.00 Blackadder the Third. The new prime minister plots to bankrupt the Prince Regent. (R)

8.30 Blackadder the Third. Edmund falls foul of Dr Johnson. (R)

9.00 The Toys That Made Christmas. A look back at playthings of the past.

10.30 James May's Man Lab Xmas Special. (R)

11.30 Victoria Wood with All the Trimmings. (R)

12.25 The Many Faces of Les Dawson. (R) **1.25** QI. (R) **1.55** Film: Beyond a Reasonable Doubt. (1956) **3.15** Close.

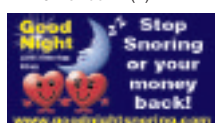
6.00 CITV: Mini CITV. **7.25** CITV. **7.45** Film: The Borrowers. (1997) Children's fantasy, starring John Goodman. **9.25** Film: March of the Penguins. (2005) Oscar-winning nature documentary, narrated by Morgan Freeman. **11.00** Film: Miracle on 34th Street. (1994) Christmas family drama remake, with Richard Attenborough. **1.05** ITV News: Weather. **1.15** Film: Aladdin. (1992) Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Robin Williams. **3.00** The Queen. **3.10** Film: Happy Feet. (2006) Animated adventure, with the voice of Elijah Wood. **5.10** ITV News: Weather. **5.30** New You've Been Framed!

6.00 Emmerdale. Hour-long episode. Amy makes a decision about Kyle's future.

7.00 All Star Family Fortunes Christmas Special.

8.00 Coronation Street. **9.00** Downton Abbey. Violet has concerns about Rosamund's new suitor (guest star Nigel Havers).

11.05 ITV News: Weather. **11.20** Benidorm. (R)



12.35 The Comedy Annual. Comedians talk about the key moments of 2011. (R) **1.35** Film: The Towering Inferno. (1974) Disaster movie, starring Paul Newman and Steve McQueen. **ITV News Headlines. 4.20** Kojak. (R) **5.15** ITV Nightscreen. **5.55** ITV Morning News.

6.10 Film: The Ugly Duckling and Me. (2006) Premiere. Animated comedy, with the voice of Morgan C Jones. **7.40** The Simpsons. (R) **8.00** The Simpsons. (R) **8.30** Film: James and the Giant Peach. (1996) Children's fantasy, with Paul Terry. **10.00** Gordon's Christmas Cookalong Live. **2.00** Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas. **2.30** The Snowman. (R) **3.00** Celebrity Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.05** Channel 4 News. **4.10** 4thought.tv. **4.15** The Alternative Christmas Message. **4.20** Deal or No Deal: Deal Point. **5.20** Film: Big. (1988) A boy is magically transported into the body of a 30-year-old man and applies his childlike brain to the problems of adult life. Comedy, starring Tom Hanks and Elizabeth Perkins.



7.15 FILM: Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs. (2009) Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of John Leguizamo.

9.00 Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special. With Ruth Jones, David Walliams, Jedward and Steps.

10.00 Rude Tube: Epic Christmas. Alex Zane presents the 50 greatest festive internet videos.

11.05 So This Is Christmas.

12.05 8 Out of 10 Cats Christmas Special. **1.05** American Football Live. **4.45** Brief Encounters of the Sporting Mind: Rally Driving. (R) **4.50** Post Modern Pastimes. (R) **5.00** Road to London 2012: That Paralympic Show. (R) **5.25** Scrapheap Challenge. (R)

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Fifi and the Flowerlotts. (R) **6.15** Fireman Sam Christmas Special. (R) **6.35** Castle Farm. **6.45** Igam Ogam. (R) **6.55** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.00** The Milkshake! Show. **7.25** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.35** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **7.45** Little Princess. (R) **8.05** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **8.10** Angelina Ballerina. **8.25** Rupert Bear. (R) **8.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.00** Film: Mist: The Tale of a Sheepdog Puppy. (2006) Live-action animal adventure, featuring the voice of Mel Giedroyc. **10.30** Trailer Horn. **10.35** Animal Rescue Squad. (R) **10.55** Andre Rieu's Christmas Spectacular. **11.55** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **12.55** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **1.55** Cars - Unidentified Flying Mater. **2.00** Film: Mrs Santa Claus. (2010) Family drama sequel, starring Doris Roberts. **3.45** Film: Mrs Santa Claus. (1996) Period musical, starring Angela Lansbury. **5.30** Film: The Santa Suit. (2010) Premiere. Comedy, starring Kevin Sorbo and Jodie Dowdall.

7.25 FILM: The Christmas Card. (2006) Romantic drama, starring John Newton and Alice Evans.

9.05 Eddie Stobart's Christmas Delivery. Festive edition of the documentary series. (R)

10.00 Britain's Favourite Christmas Songs. Festive music countdown.

1.00 SuperCasino. **3.55** Meals in Moments. (R) **4.05** Nick's Quest. (R) **4.30** Divine Designs. (R) **5.00** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.10** The Milkshake! Show. (R) **5.35** Thomas & Friends. (R) **5.45** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

ITV2
3.00 The Xtra Factor: Louis's Best and Worst
4.00 The Xtra Factor: Tulisa's Best and Worst
5.00 The Xtra Factor: Kelly's Best and Worst
6.00 The Xtra Factor: Gary's Best and Worst
7.00 Film: Jack Frost (1998) **9.00** Film: The Bourne Supremacy (2004) **11.05** Celebrity Juice: Christmas Special

ITV3
3.20 Film: Carry On Cowboy (1966) **5.20** Film: Carry On Cleo (1964) **7.10** Film: Carry On Camping (1969) **9.00** Film: Carry On Up the Jungle (1970) **10.55** Film: Carry On Jack (1963)

ITV4
2.25 Film: Night Passage (1957) **4.15** Film: Spartacus (1960) **8.00** Film: The Magnificent Seven Ride! (1972) **10.00** Film: Rocky (1976) Oscar-winning boxing drama, starring Sylvester Stallone.

BBC THREE
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes 2011: Not in 3D
8.00 Film: Armageddon (1998) **10.20** Russell Howard's Good News Extra **11.05** EastEnders

BBC FOUR
7.00 Film: El Cid (1961) **9.50** The Johnny Cash TV Show: Country Gold **10.50** Top of the Pops 1976: Christmas Day Special **11.40** Top of the Pops 1976 Christmas Special

E4
2.45 Film: Jingle All the Way (1996) **4.30** Film: Annie (1982) **7.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.55** Film: Independence Day (1996) **10.40** The Big Bang Theory 11.40 Tool Academy

FILM4
3.20 Miracle on 34th Street (1947) **5.10** Ponyo (2008) **7.15** The Ladykillers (1955). A criminal and his gang meet their match when an elderly landlady unknowingly thwarts their attempts to kill her. Ealing comedy, with Alec Guinness. **9.00** Juno (2007). Comedy, starring Ellen Page. **10.50** Watchmen (2009) Comic-book drama, starring Patrick Wilson.

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Monday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast. 9.00 CBBC. 9.10 The Gruffalo. (R) 9.35 The Gruffalo's Child. (R) 10.00 Film: The Jungle Book 2. (2003) Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Haley Joel Osment. 11.10 Film: Beverly Hills Chihuahua. (2008) Premiere. Comedy, with the voice of Drew Barrymore. 12.35 BBC News. Weather. 12.45 Regional News. Weather. 12.55 Morecambe and Wise. (R) 2.00 Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special 2011. (R) 3.00 Winter Wipeout Christmas Special. (R) 4.00 Film: Shrek 2. (2004) Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Mike Myers. 5.25 BBC News. Weather. 5.35 Regional News Programmes. Weather. 5.40 Jim'll Fix It with Shane Richie. 6.10 Film: Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa. (2008) 7.30 The Borrowers. 9.00 EastEnders. 9.30 The Royal Bodyguard. 10.00 Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special. 10.30 BBC News. Weather. 10.45 Match of the Day. 12.15 Film: The Guardian. (2006) 2.35 Sign Zone. 6.00 Holy City. (R) 3.35 BBC News.

BBC2 6.00 CBeebies. 7.00 CBBC. 8.55 Pixar: 25 Magic Moments. (R) 9.55 Film: Heidi. (2000) 11.30 Film: The Mystery of the Flamingos. (2008) 12.45 Film: Mansfield Park. (1999) 2.35 Film: Emma. (1996) 4.30 Final Score. 5.10 Film: Becoming Jane. (2007) 6.30 Film: The Christmas Winge. Christmas University Challenge. 9.00 Jane Austen: The Unseen Portrait? 10.00 Victoria Wood: Seen on TV. (R) 11.30 Ruth Jones' Christmas Cracker. (R) 12.00 QI. (R) 12.45 Grumpy: Guide to Food. 1.10 Film: Cat People. (1942) 2.20 BBC News.

ITV1 6.00 CITV: Supernormal. 6.10 SpongeBob SquarePants. (R) 6.20 Horrid Henry. (R) 6.35 Almost Naked Animals. 6.50 Almost Naked Animals. 7.05 Fleabag Monkeyface. 7.10 Fleabag Monkeyface. 7.15 Monks. (R) 7.40 Film: The Adventures of Pinocchio. (1996) 9.25 Best Ever Christmas Films. (R) 10.25 Goodnight Mister Tom. (R) 12.20 ITV News. Weather. 12.30 Film: Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties. (2006) 2.00 5.0 Greatest Harry Potter Moments. (R) 3.30 Film: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. (2002) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe. 6.20 ITV News. Weather. 6.30 Emmerdale. 7.00 The Inforgettable. Ernie Wise. 8.00 Coronation Street. 9.00 Agatha Christie's Poirot. 11.00 ITV News. Weather. 11.15 Film: Gladiator. (2000) Oscar-winning Roman epic, starring Russell Crowe. ITV News Headlines. 2.05 Film: Vertigo. (1958) 4.10 ITV Nightscreen. 5.55 ITV Morning News.

Channel 4 6.20 The Treacle People. (R) 6.30 Film: Benji the Hunted. (1987) Disney adventure, with Red Stallion. 8.00 The Bear. (R) 8.30 The Morning Line. 9.25 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 9.55 The Big Bang Theory. 10.25 The Simpsons. (R) 10.55 The Simpsons. (R) 11.25 Film: Bugsy Malone. (1976) 1.15 Channel 4 Racing. 3.40 The Simpsons. (R) 4.10 Deal or No Deal. Deal Panto. 5.10 Christmas Coach Trip. 5.45 Channel 4 News. 6.00 4thought. tv. 6.05 Hollyoaks. 6.35 Come Dine with Me: Christmas Special. 7.05 Film: Home Alone. (1990) Family comedy, starring Macaulay Culkin. 8.00 Bear's Wild Weekend with Miranda. 10.00 Chris Moyles' Christmas Quiz Night. 10.50 Father Ted: Unintelligent Design. (R) 11.20 Small, Far Away? The World of Father Ted. (R) 12.25 Father Ted. (R) 12.55 Random Acts. 1.00 Film: The Godfather. (1972) 4.05 London's Burning. (R) 5.00 World War II: The Last Heroes. (R) 5.55 Brothers & Sisters. (R)

Channel 5 6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 ThunderCats. (R) 10.35 Meerkat Manor. (R) 11.05 Meerkat Manor. (R) 11.35 Ice Road Truckers. (R) 12.35 5 News Lunchtime. 12.45 Film: The Producers. (2005) Musical comedy, starring Matthew Broderick. 3.10 Film: Seven Brides for Seven Brothers. (1954) Musical Western, starring Howard Keel. 5.10 Film: The Wizard of Oz. (1939) Musical fantasy, starring Judy Garland. 7.05 Britain's Favourite Christmas Songs. (R) 10.00 Film: Dirty Dancing. (1987) Romantic drama, with Patrick Swayze. 12.05 Film: Fragile. (2005) 2.00 SuperCasino. 4.00 Meals in Moments. (R) 4.10 Grey's Anatomy. 4.55 County Secrets. (R) 5.10 House Doctor. (R)

Tuesday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast. 8.05 Match of the Day. (R) 9.40 Film: The Road to El Dorado. (2000) 11.00 Film: Hotel for Dogs. (2009) 12.35 BBC News. Weather. 12.45 Regional News. Weather. 12.55 EastEnders. 2.50 Doctor Who. (R) 3.50 Film: Bedtime Stories. (2008) 5.20 BBC News. Weather. 5.30 Regional News. Weather. 5.40 Regional News. Weather. 5.50 Mastermind. 6.05 Film: Shrek the Third. (2007) 7.30 EastEnders. 8.00 Holy City. 9.00 Great Expectations. 10.00 BBC News. 10.10 Regional News. Weather. 10.20 National Lottery Update. 10.15 John Bishop's Britain Christmas Special. 10.45 Film: Tropic Thunder. (2008) 12.25 Film: The Heartbreak Kid. (2007) 2.15 Weatherview. 2.20 Sign Zone: Frozen Planet. (R) 3.20 Raymond Blanc's Christmas Feast. (R) 4.20 BBC News.

BBC2 6.00 CBeebies. 7.00 CBBC. 9.15 Fluffy Coves Roy. (2008) Romantic teen musical, starring Demi Lovato. 10.45 Madagascar. (R) 11.45 Yellowstone. (R) 12.45 Live Horse Racing. 3.05 Watching the Wild: Cornish Seals. (R) 3.15 Coast. (R) 4.15 Flog It! 5.00 Escape to the Country. (R) 5.45 Antiques Road Trip. (R) 6.30 Christmas University Challenge. 7.00 Hi-de-Hill! (R) 7.30 Dad's Army. (R) 8.00 You Have Been Watching - David Croft. 9.00 Three Men Go to New England. 10.00 Have I Got News for You. (R) 10.30 I've Never Seen Star Wars. 11.00 Mock the Week. (R) 11.30 The Toys That Made Christmas. (R) 1.00 The Grumpy Guide to Wilco. (R) 1.10 QI. (R) 1.20 Being Ronnie Corbett. (R) 1.30 Film: The Leopard Man. (1943) 2.35 BBC News.

ITV1 6.00 CITV: Supernormal. 6.10 SpongeBob SquarePants. (R) 6.20 Horrid Henry. (R) 6.35 Almost Naked Animals. 6.50 Almost Naked Animals. 7.05 Film: The Prince and the Pauper. (1977) 9.25 Film: King Ralph. (1991) 11.30 Film: The Mummy. 11.25 Regional News. Weather. 11.30 Film: From Time to Time. (2009) 1.20 Film: Cats & Dogs. (2001) 3.00 All Star Family Fortunes Christmas Special. (R) 4.00 Porridge. (R) 4.10 ITV News. Weather. 12.25 Regional News. Weather. 12.30 Film: The Dragon Emperor. (2008) 6.30 Regional News. Weather. 6.45 ITV News. Weather. 7.00 Emmerdale. 7.30 The Adventurer's Guide to Britain. 8.00 Susan Boyle: An Unlikely Superstar. (R) 9.00 Fast Freddie, the Widow and Me. 10.30 Film: King Kong. (2005) 11.30 ITV News. Weather. 11.45 Film: King Kong. (2005) 12.25 Film: The Simpsons. (R) 12.30 Film: Five Headlines. 3.05 Kojak. (R) 3.55 ITV Nightscreen. 5.55 ITV Morning News.

Channel 4 6.40 Sall Mali. (R) 6.45 The Treacle People. (R) 6.55 The Hoobs. (R) 7.20 Famous Fred. (R) 7.50 Little Wolf's Book of Badness. (R) 8.15 Perfect Couples. 8.40 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 9.10 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 9.40 Frasier. (R) 10.10 Frasier. (R) 10.40 The Big Bang Theory. 11.05 The Big Bang Theory. 11.30 The Simpsons. (R) 12.00 The Simpsons. (R) 12.30 Film: Five Children and It. (2004) 2.15 Film: Penelope. (2006) 4.00 Deal or No Deal: Deal Panto. 5.00 Christmas Coach Trip. 5.30 Celebrity Come Dine with Me: Extra Portions. (R) 6.00 The Simpsons. (R) 6.30 Hollyoaks. 7.00 Channel 4 News. 7.25 4thought.tv. 7.30 Come Dine with Me: Celebrity Christmas Special. 8.00 Big Fat Gypsy Christmas. (R) 9.00 Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2011. 11.05 Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special. (R) 12.10 Comedy Lab: Mr & Mrs Hotty Hot Hot Show. 12.40 Random Acts. 12.45 UK & Ireland Poker Tour. 1.00 Extreme Sailing Series. 2.05 Sailing. 2.35 Freeports on 4. (R) 3.00 Bear Volleyball. 4.00 KOTV Boxing Weekly. 4.25 World War II: The Last Heroes. (R) 5.20 Brothers & Sisters. (R)

Channel 5 6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 ThunderCats. (R) 10.35 Meerkat Manor. (R) 11.05 Animal Rescue Squad. (R) 11.20 World's Strongest Man 2011: Qualifiers. (R) 12.25 5 News Lunchtime. 12.35 Film: Crazy for Christmas. (2005) 2.25 Film: I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus. (2002) 4.10 Film: Twice Upon a Time. (1998) 5.50 Film: Little Women. (1994); 5 News Update. 8.00 World's Strongest Man 2011; 5 News at 9. 9.00 Carry On Christmas. (R) 10.05 The Greatest Ever Carry On Films. 11.05 Cor. Blimey! (R) 1.15 SuperCasino. 3.55 Meals in Moments. (R)

Wednesday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast. 9.00 Film: Spy Kids 2: Island of Lost Dreams. (2002) 10.35 Film: High School Musical 2. (2007) 12.20 BBC News. Weather. 12.30 Regional News. Weather. 12.35 Only Fools and Horses. (R) 1.25 The Two Ronnies Christmas Sketchbook. (R) 2.30 Film: Shall We Dance? (2004) 4.05 Film: Bedknobs and Broomsticks. (1971) 6.00 BBC News. Weather. 6.20 Regional News Programmes. Weather. 6.30 Celebrity Mastermind. 7.00 Frozen Planet Christmas Special. 8.00 Countryfile. 9.00 Great Expectations. 10.00 Regional News. 10.10 Regional News. Weather. 10.20 The National Lottery Wednesday Night Draws. 10.30 Comic Relief 2011: What a Cracker; National Lottery Update. 12.00 Film: It's a Boy Girl Thing. (2006) 1.25 Weatherview. 1.30 Sign Zone: Great Expectations. (R) 2.30 Film: Nativity! (2009) 4.10 BBC News.

BBC2 6.00 CBeebies. 7.00 CBBC. 9.00 Film: The Country Bears. (2002) 10.25 Madagascar. (R) 11.25 Yellowstone. (R) 12.25 The Many Faces of Michael Caine. (R) 1.25 Film: The Man Who Would Be King. (1975) Period adventure, starring Sean Connery and Michael Caine. 3.30 Flog It! (R) 4.30 Escape to the Country. (R) 5.30 Antiques Road Trip. (R) 6.15 Porridge. (R) 6.20 Fleabag Monkeyface. 7.15 Monks. (R) 7.40 Film: The Adventures of Pinocchio. (1996) 9.25 Best Ever Christmas Films. (R) 10.25 Goodnight Mister Tom. (R) 12.20 ITV News. Weather. 12.30 Film: Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties. (2006) 2.00 5.0 Greatest Harry Potter Moments. (R) 3.30 Film: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. (2002) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe. 6.20 ITV News. Weather. 6.30 Emmerdale. 7.00 The Inforgettable. Ernie Wise. 8.00 Coronation Street. 9.00 Agatha Christie's Poirot. 11.00 ITV News. Weather. 11.15 Film: Gladiator. (2000) Oscar-winning Roman epic, starring Russell Crowe. ITV News Headlines. 2.05 Film: Vertigo. (1958) 4.10 ITV Nightscreen. 5.55 ITV Morning News.

ITV1 6.00 CITV: Supernormal. 6.10 SpongeBob SquarePants. (R) 6.20 Horrid Henry. (R) 6.35 Almost Naked Animals. 6.50 Almost Naked Animals. 7.05 Fleabag Monkeyface. 7.10 Fleabag Monkeyface. 7.15 Monks. (R) 7.40 Film: The Adventures of Pinocchio. (1996) 9.25 Best Ever Christmas Films. (R) 10.25 Goodnight Mister Tom. (R) 12.20 ITV News. Weather. 12.30 Film: Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties. (2006) 2.00 5.0 Greatest Harry Potter Moments. (R) 3.30 Film: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. (2002) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe. 6.20 ITV News. Weather. 6.30 Emmerdale. 7.00 The Inforgettable. Ernie Wise. 8.00 Coronation Street. 9.00 Agatha Christie's Poirot. 11.00 ITV News. Weather. 11.15 Film: Gladiator. (2000) Oscar-winning Roman epic, starring Russell Crowe. ITV News Headlines. 2.05 Film: Vertigo. (1958) 4.10 ITV Nightscreen. 5.55 ITV Morning News.

Channel 4 6.10 Treacle People. (R) 6.30 Christmas Special. (R) 6.55 The Hoobs. (R) 7.20 Famous Fred. (R) 7.50 Perfect Couples. 8.15 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.45 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 9.15 Frasier. (R) 9.45 The Big Bang Theory. 10.15 The Big Bang Theory. 10.45 The Simpsons. (R) 11.15 The Simpsons. (R) 11.45 Film: Firehouse Dog. (2007) 1.50 Film: Star Trek: First Contact. (1996) 4.00 Deal or No Deal: Deal Panto. 5.00 Christmas Coach Trip. 5.30 Celebrity Come Dine with Me: Extra Portions. (R) 6.00 The Simpsons. (R) 6.30 Hollyoaks. 7.00 Channel 4 News. 7.25 4thought.tv. 7.30 Come Dine with Me: Celebrity Christmas Special. 8.00 Big Fat Gypsy Christmas. (R) 9.00 Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2011. 11.05 Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special. (R) 12.10 Comedy Lab: Mr & Mrs Hotty Hot Hot Show. 12.40 Random Acts. 12.45 UK & Ireland Poker Tour. 1.00 Extreme Sailing Series. 2.05 Sailing. 2.35 Freeports on 4. (R) 3.00 Bear Volleyball. 4.00 KOTV Boxing Weekly. 4.25 World War II: The Last Heroes. (R) 5.20 Brothers & Sisters. (R)

Channel 5 6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 ThunderCats. (R) 10.35 Meerkat Manor. (R) 11.05 Animal Rescue Squad. (R) 11.20 World's Strongest Man 2011: Qualifiers. (R) 12.25 5 News Lunchtime. 12.35 Film: Crazy for Christmas. (2005) 2.25 Film: I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus. (2002) 4.10 Film: Twice Upon a Time. (1998) 5.50 Film: Little Women. (1994); 5 News Update. 8.00 World's Strongest Man 2011; 5 News at 9. 9.00 Carry On Christmas. (R) 10.05 The Greatest Ever Carry On Films. 11.05 Cor. Blimey! (R) 1.15 SuperCasino. 3.55 Meals in Moments. (R)

Thursday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast. 9.00 CBBC. 9.10 Film: Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over. (2003) 10.25 Film: Sharpy's Fabulous Adventure. (2011) 11.55 Film: George of the Jungle. (1997) 1.20 BBC News. Weather. 1.35 Regional News. Weather. 1.40 Only Fools and Horses. (R) 2.35 The Two Ronnies Sketchbook. (R) 3.35 Film: Superman Returns. (2006) 6.00 BBC News. Weather. 6.20 Regional News Programmes. Weather. 6.30 Celebrity Mastermind. 7.00 Wallace & Gromit: A Matter of Loaf and Death. (R) 7.30 EastEnders. 8.00 Earthlight. 9.00 Great Expectations. 10.00 BBC News. 10.10 Regional News. Weather. 10.20 Absolutely Fabulous. (R) 10.50 Film: I Love You, Man. (2008) 12.30 Skiing Weatherview. 12.35 Sign Zone: James May's Man Lab Xmas Special. (R) 1.35 Great Expectations. (R) 2.35 Lapland. (R) 3.50 BBC News.

BBC2 6.00 CBeebies. 7.00 CBBC. 8.45 Film: Tarzan's Greatest Adventure. (1959) 10.05 Madagascar. (R) 11.05 Yellowstone. (R) 12.05 Film: The Ipcress File. (1965) 1.50 Film: Dirty Rotten Scoundrels. (1988) 3.35 Flog It! (R) 4.35 Escape to the Country. (R) 5.35 Antiques Road Trip. (R) 6.20 Film: Confessions of a Shopaholic. (2009) 8.00 Dragons' Den: The Hilary Dwyer Story. 9.00 QI. 9.30 Never Mind the Buzzcocks. 10.00 The Bleak Old Shop of Stuff. (R) 11.00 Have I Got 2010 for You. (R) 11.30 QI. (R) 12.00 I've Never Seen Star Wars. (R) 12.30 The John Craven Years. (R) 1.30 Film: The Body Snatcher. (1945) 2.50 BBC News.

ITV1 6.00 CITV: Monk. 6.05 SpongeBob SquarePants. (R) 6.15 Horrid Henry. (R) 6.30 Almost Naked Animals. 6.45 Almost Naked Animals. 6.55 Fleabag Monkeyface. 7.10 Fleabag Monkeyface. 7.15 Monks. (R) 7.40 Film: The Adventures of Pinocchio. (1996) 9.25 Best Ever Christmas Films. (R) 10.25 Goodnight Mister Tom. (R) 12.20 ITV News. Weather. 12.30 Film: Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties. (2006) 2.00 5.0 Greatest Harry Potter Moments. (R) 3.30 Film: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. (2002) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe. 6.20 ITV News. Weather. 6.30 Emmerdale. 7.00 The Inforgettable. Ernie Wise. 8.00 Coronation Street. 9.00 Agatha Christie's Poirot. 11.00 ITV News. Weather. 11.15 Film: Gladiator. (2000) Oscar-winning Roman epic, starring Russell Crowe. ITV News Headlines. 2.05 Film: Vertigo. (1958) 4.10 ITV Nightscreen. 5.55 ITV Morning News.

Channel 4 6.15 Sall Mali. (R) 6.20 The Hoobs. (R) 7.10 Famous Fred. (R) 7.45 The Perfect Couples. 8.05 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.35 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 9.05 Frasier. (R) 9.35 Frasier. (R) 10.05 The Big Bang Theory. 10.35 The Big Bang Theory. 11.05 The Simpsons. (R) 11.35 The Simpsons. (R) 12.05 Film: See Spot Run. (2001) Canine comedy, starring David Arquette. 1.55 Film: Never Been Kissed. (1999) Romantic comedy, with Drew Barrymore and Michael Vartan. 4.00 Come Dine with Me: 5.00 Christmas Coach Trip. 5.30 Celebrity Come Dine with Me: Extra Portions. (R) 6.00 The Simpsons. (R) 6.30 Hollyoaks. 7.00 Channel 4 News. 7.25 4thought.tv. 7.30 Come Dine with Me: Celebrity Christmas Special. 8.00 Living with the Amish. 9.00 Film: Dorian Gray. (2009) Premiere. Period horror, starring Ben Barnes. 11.10 Comic Strip Presents: The Hunt for Tony Blair. (R) 12.15 Random Acts. 12.20 Film: The Godfather: Part II. (1974) 3.50 Brave New World with Stephen Hawking. (R) 4.45 Brothers & Sisters. (R) 5.35 Sall Mali. (R) 5.40 The Treacle People. (R)

Channel 5 6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 ThunderCats. (R) 10.35 Meerkat Manor. (R) 11.05 Animal Rescue Squad. (R) 11.20 World's Strongest Man 2011: Qualifiers. (R) 12.25 5 News Lunchtime. 12.35 Ice Road Truckers. (R) 12.55 Film: Back to the Secret Garden. (2000) 2.55 Film: David Copperfield. (2000) Charles 6.20 World's Strongest Man 2011; 5 News Update. 8.00 World's Strongest Man 2011; 5 News at 9. 9.00 The Mentalist. 10.00 It's All About Amy. 11.00 The Truth About Cheryl Cole. (R) 12.00 SuperCasino. 3.55 Meals in Moments. (R) 4.05 Wildlife SOS. (R)

Friday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast. 9.00 Film: The Cat in the Hat. (2003) 10.20 Film: Sky High. (2005) 11.55 Film: Paulie. (1998) 1.20 BBC News. Weather. 1.35 Regional News. Weather. 1.45 Only Fools and Horses. (R) 2.40 Only Fools and Horses. (R) 3.30 Film: National Treasure. (2004) 5.30 Wallace & Gromit: A Close Shave. (R) 6.00 BBC News. Weather. 6.20 Regional News. Weather. 6.30 Celebrity Mastermind. 7.00 The One Show: Best of 2011. 8.00 EastEnders. 8.30 Have I Got News for You. 9.00 New Tricks. (R) 10.05 BBC News. 10.10 Regional News. Weather. 10.20 The Graham Norton Show. 11.05 John Bishop's Britain Christmas Special. (R) 11.50 The National Lottery Friday Night Draws. 11.55 Film: Cold Creek Manor. (2005) 1.50 Weatherview. 1.55 Sign Zone: Great Expectations. (R) 2.55 Fry's Planet Word. (R) 3.55 BBC News.

BBC2 6.00 CBeebies. 7.00 CBBC. 9.00 Film: David Copperfield. (1935) 11.00 Film: The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby. (1947) 12.50 Film: A Tale of Two Cities. (1958) 2.45 Coast. (R) 3.45 Flog It! 4.45 Escape to the Country. (R) 5.45 Antiques Road Trip. (R) 6.30 The Good Life. (R) 7.00 As Time Goes By. (R) 8.00 The Many Faces of Dame Judy Dench. 9.00 Mrs Dickens' Family Christmas. 10.00 QI. 10.30 Never Mind the Buzzcocks. (R) 12.25 Never Mind the Buzzcocks. (R) 12.55 Grumpy Guide to Driving. (R) 1.25 Film: The Curse of the Cat People. (1944) 2.35 BBC News.

ITV1 6.00 CITV: Monk. 6.05 SpongeBob SquarePants. (R) 6.15 Horrid Henry. (R) 6.30 Almost Naked Animals. 6.45 Almost Naked Animals. 6.55 Fleabag Monkeyface. 7.15 Fleabag Monkeyface. 7.20 Fleabag Monkeyface. 7.25 Film: Share a Story Monkeyface. 7.30 Fleabag Monkeyface. 7.35 Film: K-9. (1989) 9.25 Countrywise at Christmas. (R) 10.25 Film: The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery. (1966) 12.05 All Star Family Fortunes. (R) 1.05 ITV News. Weather. 1.25 Regional News. Weather. 1.30 Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: After They Were Famous. (R) 2.30 Agatha Christie's Poirot. (R) 4.30 Inspector Morse. (R) 6.30 Regional News. Weather. 6.45 ITV News. Weather. 7.00 Emmerdale. 7.30 Coronation Street. 8.00 That Was 2011: The ITV News Review of the Year. 8.30 You've Been Framed! (R) 9.00 A Royal Year to Remember. 10.00 ITV News at Ten. 10.30 ITV News. Weather. 10.45 Film: The Holiday. (2006) Romantic comedy, starring Cameron Diaz and Kate Winslet. 12.45 I'll Be Right on the Night. (R) 1.45 The Zone. ITV News Headlines. 3.30 Kojak. (R) 4.25 ITV Nightscreen. 5.55 ITV Morning News.

Channel 4 6.15 The Hoobs. (R) 6.40 Wildie Stories. (R) 7.10 Perfect Couples. 7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.05 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.35 Frasier. (R) 9.05 Frasier. (R) 9.35 The Big Bang Theory. 10.05 The Big Bang Theory. 10.35 The Simpsons. (R) 11.10 The Simpsons. (R) 11.40 Film: Clueless. (1995) Teen comedy, starring Alicia Silverstone. (R) 12.05 Film: CutThroat Island. (1995) Swashbuckling adventure, starring Geena Davis. 4.00 Come Dine with Me. 5.00 Christmas Coach Trip. 5.30 Celebrity Come Dine with Me: Extra Portions. (R) 6.00 The Simpsons. (R) 6.30 Hollyoaks. 7.00 Channel 4 News. 7.25 4thought.tv. 7.30 Come Dine with Me: Celebrity Christmas Special. 8.00 Bear's Wild Weekend with Miranda. (R) 9.00 Comedy Showcase: The Angelos Neil Epithemiou Show. 9.30 Lee Evans: Access All Areas. (R) 10.35 An Evening with Lee Evans. 11.05 The World of Lee Evans. (R) 11.40 The World of Lee Evans. (R) 12.10 Random Acts. 12.15 Film: The Godfather: Part III. (1990) 3.15 Steve Jobs: iChanged the World. (R) 4.10 Brave New World with Stephen Hawking. (R)

Channel 5 6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 ThunderCats. (R) 10.35 Animal Rescue Squad. (R) 11.05 Meerkat Manor. (R) 11.20 World's Strongest Man 2011. (R) 12.25 5 News Lunchtime. 12.35 Ice Road Truckers. (R) 12.50 Film: Showdown at Abilene. (1956) 3.15 Film: Alice in Wonderland. (1999) 5.45 Film: Snow White. (2001) 7.30 Fifth Gear. 5 News Update. 8.00 World's Strongest Man 2011; 5 News Update. 9.00 Most Shocking Celebrity Moments of 2011. 12.00 SuperCasino. 4.05 Motorsport Mundial. 4.30 Fifth Gear. (R) 4.55 County Secrets. (R) 5.10 House Doctor. (R)

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From left to right, Willis Place sales adviser Jill Griffiths, site manager Rob Gray and sales adviser Jo Flavell

Come and meet team at new homes development

BARRATT West Midlands has invited homebuyers to come and meet the new team at the company's Willis Place development in Worcester.

Barratt West Midlands sales director Graydon Worthing said: "Buying a home is generally one of the biggest investments anyone can make in their lifetime, so it is crucial you are confident in the team you are buying from. "That's why we are inviting homebuyers to find out more about the people working at Willis Place.

"It's a unique development that has a real community feel and we have a terrific team there."

Visitors to the sales office will be greeted by Willis Place's helpful sales advisers Jo Flavell and Jill Griffiths, who are on hand to guide purchasers through their move.

Jo, 32, has worked in the hospitality trade before and loves meeting new people "Willis Place is a brand new Barratt development in Worcester and it's great to see how the buildings are being brought to life.

"We are very much focused on the community here at Willis Place and the communal areas on site are looking great, a lot of time is being spent on them. I've always been interested in

homes and new builds, and now I can make sure that people find their dream home.

"It's great that we can offer people different schemes to be able to buy their dream home and I've noticed that FirstBuy is very popular."

Jill, 51, lives in a village to the north of Worcester with her husband and their 18-year-old son and has worked as an estate agent before.

Right

"I like helping customers choose the property that is right for them and guiding them through the buying process. It's nice because I can work with them from their first visit right through to the day when they move into their new home.

"Working at Willis Place is great because it's situated in such a lovely part of Worcester.

The development is opposite the golf and country club and Worcester is a buzzing university and cathedral city that has lots to offer such as great shops, restaurants and sporting facilities."

Also on site at Willis Place is Site Manager Rob Gray, 37, from Coventry who has been with Barratt for seven years and started off as an assistant site manager, he has also previously won the 'Pride in the Job' award.

"The most important thing about my job is being dedicated, taking pride in what you do, the way you build and looking after your customers.

"Willis Place is the first development to offer the brand new Barratt range and build work is going really well.

"The reward that I get from my job is when customers are satisfied. That means that we have done a great job and helped them every step of their way with their dream home."

Willis Place currently offers a range of one- and two-bedroom apartments priced from £104,950 and three- and four-bedroom homes priced from £184,950. For more information, please contact the sales office on 07834543793 open daily between 10am and 5pm.

For more information please call the sales hotline on 0844 811 9933 open seven days a week from 8am to 9pm or log on to www.barratt-homes.co.uk/willisplace

● Barratt West Midlands has been confirmed as meriting the maximum five star official rating from the Home Builders Federation (HBF) for the second year in a row.

The news was announced after more than 20,000 new home buyers across the country took part in this year's HBF customer satisfaction survey.

Gavin proves a real asset

LEADING housebuilder David Wilson Mercia has recently appointed Gavin Lambert as the new sales adviser at its Brecon View development on Holloway Street in Gornal.

This new boy on the block is now inviting homebuyers to visit Brecon View to find their dream home.

Gavin aged 32, lives in Walsall and has a degree in interior architecture.

"I like the family atmosphere and the camaraderie at David Wilson Homes and everyone is always very helpful," commented Gavin.

"Being a sales adviser is a high pressured job but everyone understands the pace of how things work."

"Having an interior architecture degree really benefits me and my role as a sales adviser.

"I am able to make an empty room look like a finished room in the mind of the potential purchasers and give them option of how they could set out their furniture."

Great

"Because of my degree I am also able to go over site plans and any technical matters that may arise.

"This gives me great confidence when talking to customers."

Rita Tyler, sales manager for David Wilson Mercia commented, "Brecon View is a fantastic development which has really come into its own due to the type of properties available and its excellent location."

"Gavin is a true asset to the site. His helpful, willing and friendly attitude is welcomed by customers who visit Bre-



Gavin Lambert is the latest addition to the team at Holloway Street, Gornal

con View and we've all been really pleased with the start he has made there."

Located on Holloway Street, Brecon View features two, three and four-bedroom houses priced from £147,000. For more information, contact the sales office on 01902 672716, which is open daily from 10am to 5pm.

Alternatively, call the sales hotline

on 0844 811 3322 open seven days a week from 8am to 9pm or log on to www.dwh.co.uk/

David Wilson Mercia has been confirmed as meriting the maximum five star official rating from the Home Builders Federation (HBF) for the second year in a row.

The news was announced after more than 20,000 new home buyers across

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MERRY HILL, MADISON AVENUE

An Unfurnished modern three storey townhouse within walking distance to Merry Hill, briefly comprising of: Fitted Kitchen, Downstairs wc, Three Bedrooms, Master En Suite, Lounge and Dining Room/Study, Allocated Parking Space

£595 PCM



HALESOWEN, HOPE STREET

A superbly presented unfurnished first floor apartment. Situated in a cul-de-sac location and been fully refurbished, briefly comprises of: Two Bedrooms, Lounge, Fantastic Fitted Kitchen, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Lovely Modern Bathroom With Shower, On Road Parking space. Viewing Recommended.

£575 PCM



HALESOWEN, HAGLEY STREET

A fully refurbished modern duplex apartment above an electrical shop in the very centre of Halesowen. Briefly comprising of: Large Open Plan Living Area with Modern Fitted Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Rental Includes Electricity

£560 PCM



NETHERTON, PAINT CUP ROW

A refurbished two bedroom detached set in a cul-de-sac location, briefly comprising of: Fitted Kitchen, Lounge, Two Bedrooms, Downstairs Bathroom, Gas Central Heating and Enclosed Garden. Viewing Essential

£550 PCM



HALESOWEN, CLENT VIEW ROAD

Excellent value for money. An exceptionally spacious home in a very popular location close to local shops and bus routes to Merry Hill, Halesowen and Stourbridge. Close to Colley Lane Primary School, briefly comprising of: Three Double Bedrooms, Through Living, Fitted Kitchen, House Bathroom, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Front and Rear Gardens, Unfurnished.

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HALESOWEN, MANSELL CLOSE

A beautifully presented semi detached family home briefly comprising of: Three Bedrooms with the Main Bedroom Having Fitted Wardrobes, Spacious Living Room, Modern Dining Kitchen, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, House Bathroom with Shower, Gardens and 2 Allocated Parking Spaces.

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ROWLEY REGIS, MOOR LANE

A large and spacious bungalow with great views from the front, briefly comprises of: Two Bedrooms, Fitted Kitchen, Spacious Lounge, House Bathroom and Tiered Garden. Driveway Parking, Part Furnished to Suit

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CRADLEY HEATH, SIDAWAY STREET

A superbly refurbished mid terrace property within walking distance to Old Hill train centre, with an internal inspection recommended, briefly comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Walk in Dressing Room, Lounge, Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen with Appliances and Utility Area, Bathroom with Shower Cabinet but NO Bath, Double Glazing, Electric Heating, On Road Parking, Low Maintenance Rear Garden

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OLDBURY, KELLNER GARDENS

A wonderful unfurnished second floor apartment in a quiet spot, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Living Room Through to Dining Area, Fitted Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Master Bedroom with En-Suite Shower Room, House Bathroom, Allocated Parking Space, Unfurnished

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DUDLEY, SOUTHGATE WAY

A Modern spacious well presented unfurnished semi detached house, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Living Room, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Garage and Off Road Parking. Viewing Highly Recommended.

£485 PCM



CRADLEY HEATH, MEADOW WALK

A superbly refurbished mid-terrace property comprising of: Two Double Bedrooms, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Large Bathroom with P-Shaped Bath and Shower, Driveway Parking, Unfurnished, A Must See Property!

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CEDAR MEWS, FERGUSON DRIVE

A lovely unfurnished modern second floor apartment, briefly comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Fitted Kitchen, Spacious Lounge, Bathroom with Shower, Two Allocated Parking Spaces, Internal Viewing Recommended

£450 PCM



CRADLEY HEATH, KING STREET

A well presented top floor modern apartment, ideally located close to all local amenities and transport links, briefly comprising of: One Double Bedroom, Fitted Kitchen, Spacious Lounge, Bathroom with Shower, Allocated Parking

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A fantastic value for money two bedroom flat above a shop. Briefly comprising of: Spacious Lounge, Two Large Bedrooms, Newly Fitted Carpets Throughout, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazed, Close to Dudley College and Town Centre. Viewing Essential. Available Immediately.

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An Unfurnished ground floor flat on a popular development, briefly comprising of: Double Bedroom, Fitted Kitchen (OWN COOKER TO BE SUPPLIED), Bathroom with Shower, Lounge, Electric Storage Heating, Parking, Communal garden

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SPORT

thechronicle

Visitors squander simple chances

CAUSEWAY UNITED and Bridgnorth drew 1-1 after a game that exploded into life in the last 10 minutes.

There were two goals and two clear opportunities missed by the visitors, who deserved to win the Midland Alliance clash on the basis of chances created.

Not that there were many of those, although Kevin Buxton should have given Bridgnorth the lead on 20 minutes when he put the ball wide from close range after Phil Grove set him up.

A minute later, Ash Jones produced a good save from Causeway goalkeeper Tom Turner. Causeway's only real chance of the first half came when Craig Gregg volleyed at Chris Crook.

Just after the break, Tom Reynolds should have done better than head straight at Crook when set up by Scott Stevenson.

Ash Jones gave the visitors the lead when he shot home from the edge of the area on 80 minutes.

But Adam Meacham headed home a Danny Priest cross four minutes from time to maintain Causeway's unbeaten home league record.

Bridgnorth should have won it but Will Meredith wasted a simple chance.

Blackheath victory slips from grasp

BLACKHEATH had to settle for a share of the West Midlands League Division One points after they let slip a two-goal lead against Stone Old Alleynians.

The hosts edged the first half and went in at half-time in front courtesy of an own goal from Stone's Joe Woodward. Darryl Johns missed a good chance to equalise when he fired wide after rounding the keeper.

Blackheath looked set to clinch the win when they broke forward with 15 minutes left and Robert Radcliffe fired home to make it 2-0.

But Alleynians rallied and staged a dramatic rescue act in the final five minutes. A Matty Wood cross was rifled home by Steve Bennett to cut the deficit and the Mark Varley's cross-shot found the net with virtually the last kick of the match.

Heathens to start with a Staffordshire clash

By Nigel Pearson

DUDLEY HEATHENS have confirmed the prestigious British Under-21 final will be staged at their adopted Wolverhampton home on Tuesday, April 24.

And the club have also agreed to launch the 2012 season with a Staffordshire Cup clash against neighbours Stoke.

Chairman Nigel Pearson said: "Stoke are assembling another superb side following their successful 2011 season and in Ritchie Worrall, Ash Birks and Jaimie Pickard they have a powerful spearhead.

"I must admit I was interested in bringing Pickard to our club last season and obvi-

ously we have the Chris Van Straaten connection as he owns his contract with Wolverhampton.

"But the numbers game really ruled out Jaimie coming to us this season but he was tremendous in 2011 for Stoke and I wish him all the best.

"I'm sure we will be in for two superb meetings to open the season and both will be a good test for the respective teams.

"Naturally we would love to win our home meeting and it would be lovely to win

over two legs against a top team like Stoke. We will announce the dates once they are agreed, but every time we take the Heathens to Loomer Road it reminds me of our season there in 1996 when we had Greg Hancock and Billy Hamill spearheading the team.

"The promoters at the time deserve great credit for keeping the Heathens going after the loss of Dudley Wood Stadium, but ultimately the mathematics didn't add up.

"We're delighted to be staging the British Under-21 final and I would urge all our fans to put Tuesday, April 24 in their diary.

Season tickets won't be valid, though, as this is a British Speedway Promoters' Association shared event."

And on the subject of season tickets, Pearson says sales are up on this time last year. "We had some orders over the weekend which took us past the equivalent stage last season which is a terrific achievement," he said. "I think it underlines the fact that the fans like the look of the team and also believe it's good value for money.

"There will be a marginal increase in ticket prices after December 31 but we feel it's great value for our supporters."

Strike helps melt icy times for Peter

Blackburn 1 Albion 2

PETER ODEMWINGIE knows all about frosty receptions but he has forgotten his winter of discontent.

After his stunning winner at chilly Blackburn the striker joked temperatures in Russia – where he played for Lokomotiv Moscow – could dip to minus 30 in December.

Odemwingie has blown hot and cold this season but Albion now hope his super strike in Saturday's 2-1 win at Ewood Park can stoke the Baggies' fires.

After a frosty response from boss Roy Hodgson about his injury record last month, Albion can once again call on their flying Nigerian – who insisted the winner is the start of his revival.

Saturday's 2-1 win at Blackburn erased the memory of the home reverse against Wigan the previous weekend and again catapulted Odemwingie into the spotlight.

It was a sweet strike after the most trying spell of his Albion career.

Expectation had manifested itself into pressure which he has struggled to cope with after just two goals prior to his Blackburn belter.

Much was expected of him this term after last year's 15-goal haul convinced the Baggies to hand him a fresh, bumper contract in August.

But he freely admitted to losing focus during an injury-blighted two months, which saw him seemingly at odds with a frustrated Hodgson.

The boss last month claimed the injured striker had given Albion "nothing" this season and in response Odemwingie tweeted a picture of his swollen knee.

It was a move which could have left the striker out in the cold as tensions threatened to boil over.

The poor display against Wigan left further questions about his state of mind –



Peter Odemwingie takes on David Dunn during Albion's 2-1 win at Blackburn

but Hodgson's patience and persistence finally paid off.

Odemwingie has played second fiddle to the all-action Shane Long this season – and rightly so – after a number of below-par performances.

But, at Ewood Park, there was a bounce in the striker which has been missing this season, an enthusiasm which the 30-year-old conceded he had lost.

And his third goal of the campaign – one of his best in a Baggies shirt – proved there is life in the hitman. His partnership with Long is yet to seriously bear fruit but they enjoyed their best game together against a

desperately ordinary Rovers side. It left Blackburn second from bottom but the Baggies cared little for their rival's plight after putting five points between themselves and the drop zone.

Following their Wigan defeat, victory over Blackburn was vital to ensure Albion did not get sucked further into a relegation scrap during a hectic Christmas schedule.

They have laboured this season, failing to pick up points which has seen them flirt with more danger than they would like.

Draws with Fulham and Sunderland – coupled with defeats to Stoke and Wigan – have made sure there have been more

nerves than expected. But they dispatched Blackburn with a controlled and composed game to ease immediate worries.

Gareth McAuley continued his impressive form by snuffing out Yakubu's threat, while Youssef Mulumbu's cool presence in the middle formed a solid base.

Long and Odemwingie unsettled the Rovers defence and James Morrison was a constant menace on the wing – even before his stunning second-half opener.

The midfielder's wonderful 20-yard volley continued his penchant for the spectacular and was his reward for a fine individual outing.

But the 25-year-old's faultless afternoon was blighted when he limped off with a hamstring injury late on.

It was a blow in a highly successful afternoon – one where the only complaint was that Albion left it so late.

Odemwingie should have opened the scoring instead of glancing a header wide after 15 minutes from Chris Brunt's cross.

Their dominance frustrated the home fans, who were itching for an excuse to round on beleaguered boss Steve Kean.

The poisonous atmosphere once aided Albion and Odemwingie tested Paul Robinson before Morten Gamst Pedersen's free-kick was tipped over by the under-worked Ben Foster.

Albion, the better team throughout, should have pushed on after Morrison's thunderbolt seven minutes after the break but failed to capitalise on their advantage.

It allowed ex-Walsall star Scott Dann to bundle in 18 minutes from time when the visitors failed to deal with Chris Samba's knock-down as Rovers went route one.

Morrison twice went close from distance as time ticked down before Odemwingie's last minute intervention.

Receiving Steven Reid's pass on the right, he breezed past Pedersen to unleash an unstoppable curling effort into the corner from 18 yards.

A reborn Odemwingie is Albion's biggest asset. Now they must harness him.

No treats for Yeltz in trip to seaside

HALESOWEN failed to build on an early lead and fell to a disappointing 3-2 Evo-Stik South Division One defeat after Chas Hemmings struck a hat-trick for lowly Clevedon.

The afternoon started brightly for the visitors when Nathaniel Gaines swung over a left-wing cross and Justin Nisbett was left free to head Halesowen into a fifth-minute lead.

Clevedon had produced little until Hemmings bundled home an equaliser from George Brimson's cross in the 18th minute.

As Halesowen's early promise evaporated, Clevedon created the clearer chances. The Seaside took the lead three minutes before the interval when Hemmings unleashed a screaming 25-yard drive.

At the start of the second half Yeltz had to replace the injured Paul Evans and his replacement Simon Flower was kept busy.

Hemmings completed his hat-trick in the 74th minute by heading home Brimson's corner.

Yeltz substitute Naveed Arshad curled in a loose ball with six minutes left but it was not enough.

It's defeat number 18 for the B's

BUSTLEHOLME missed the opportunity to climb out of the West Midlands Premier bottom three with yet another home defeat, a 2-0 loss to Wellington.

Visitors Wellington made sure the B's suffered their ninth home reverse of the season, albeit with the help of a generous Bustleholme defence.

In a scrappy affair the visitors took the lead in the 15th minute when defender Tom Hiatt turned the ball into his own net.

Although Bustleholme huffed and puffed in front of goal, they could not find a way past a stubborn Wellington defence.

As the game seemed to be finishing with just the one goal, Jimmy Dale put through his own net to double the visitors' lead. It was Bustleholme's 18th defeat of a difficult season in which they have not drawn any of their 24 matches.

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Brum to start with a trip to Swindon

BIRMINGHAM Brummies boss Graham Drury wants his side to be home-town heroes as the 2012 Elite League speedway fixture lists were released.

Birmingham open with a trip to Swindon on April 5 but follow with four home matches. Co-promoter and team manager Drury reckons that can only benefit what will be a new-look side.

March
11 Ben Fund Bonanza (H), 15 Press and practice, 22 Wolves (H) Midland League, 23 Coventry (A) Midland League, 25 Wolves (A) Midland League, 29 Coventry (H) Midland League.

April
5 Swindon (A), 6 Swindon (H), 11 Wolves (H), 19 Coventry (H).

May
3 Belle Vue (H), 14 Belle Vue (A), 21 Peterborough (A), 24 Poole (H), 28 Coventry (A), 31 Reserved for Knockout Cup match (H).

June
6 King's Lynn (A), 7 King's Lynn (H), 14 Lakeside (H), 20 Poole (A), 28 Eastbourne (H).

July
2 Wolves (A), 5 Peterborough (H), 6 Lakeside (A), 19 Poole (H), 21 Eastbourne (A).

August
2 Swindon (H), 9 Swindon (A), 15 Poole (A), 16 Coventry (H), 17 Coventry (A), 20 Wolves (A), 23 Jason Lyons Farewell (H), 29 Belle Vue (A), 30 Wolves (H).

September
6 Belle Vue (H), others to be announced.
All are Elite League fixtures unless stated otherwise.

Relay wins earn third

SWIMMERS from Halesowen Swimming Club travelled to Leamington Spa to take part in the final round of the West Midlands 2011 National League.

As ever in the final round of the national league, teams with little to swim for did not put out their strongest team and, as the gala progressed, positions changed hands regularly.

Halesowen began strongly and after the opening relays lay in second place but fell to fourth place by the half-way mark.

The team's customary strong showing in the final relays saw them finish third.

Individual wins went to Ben Meakin in the butterfly, Chloe Robbins and Jack Slattery in the freestyle, Jacob Darby and Josh Bradley in the breaststroke.

The 15-year-old boys relay team were unbeatable, winning both the freestyle and medley races. The team included Joe Coxon, Piers Boyack and Max Rollason.

Bent confirms he is fully committed to Villa

By Timothy Abraham

DARREN Bent has insisted he is fully committed to Villa and dismissed speculation linking him with a move away from the club he says he loves playing for.

The 27-year-old striker had been mentioned as a potential January transfer target for QPR among others as his passion for the Villa cause was called into question by supporters after the club's 2-0 defeat to Liverpool.

It happened after Bent, who missed the match through injury, elected to go Christmas shopping rather than watch the final 20 minutes of the match at home on television. But the England international, who joined

Villa for a club record £24 million last January, maintained that despite the backlash of criticism he cares deeply about playing for the claret and blues and is not going anywhere.

"I can assure the Villa fans that I'm committed to the football club and I love playing for Villa. All I can do now is apologise to them," said Bent.

"I am passionate about Villa and playing here and I want to score goals for the team to do my best for the Villa fans. People some-

times forget where Villa where in the Premier League table when I came here - Sunderland were sixth at the time. But I wanted to come here and achieve things and that has not changed.

"With January coming up there is always going to be rumours. I moved last January and with this whole thing over the weekend these things quickly grow out of proportion. But I just want to reiterate, I'm fully committed to the football club and want to say sorry to the fans."

Bent also revealed that his relationship with Villa boss Alex McLeish is fine and that his absence from the game was solely down

to the thigh/groin problem he picked up training.

"There are conspiracy people who say I'd stayed away and fallen out with Alex, or that we've not got on over something, but it's the complete opposite. It seems that something so simple as me popping out to the shops has been completely blown out of proportion," added Bent.

"I had permission from the doctor and from the gaffer - everyone at the club knew about it. It wasn't like I was meant to be at a football match and I've just said 'nah I'm not going' and then just left. All I've done is nipped into a shop and got something."

OLSSON TALKS OVER CONTRACT ONGOING

JONAS OLSSON has insisted he is happy at Albion and revealed he is still in talks over an extension to his Hawthorns contract.

The Sweden international requested an interview with local media after reports from his homeland last week hinted that contract talks were on hold.

And the popular centre-back insisted he has not pulled the plug on contract talks and could still extend his current deal, which has 18 months to run.

"I have been here for four years and I have signed two contracts already and I have been speaking with Dan Ashworth (sporting director) and the club for a while about extending," he said. "I can definitely see myself extending my contract but, like always when you're

negotiating contracts, there are bits and pieces that need to come together and it's an ongoing process.

"Because I have more than a year and a half left on my contract there is no rush. That's the way I feel and it's the way the club feel."

Doubts over the 28-year-old's future were triggered by quotes, translated from a Swedish interview, claiming he was eyeing a move to a club "that fights for titles."

But Olsson said: "I don't really like it when people take an article from another language and try to translate it, especially taking bits and pieces out of context."

"I said I am very happy here, I've had four good years here and I am very grateful and happy for where I am. But I think it's important that in this business or any business you be professional."

"Being professional for me is about having dreams and ambitions and I think that's important wherever you are."

"You can be happy and grateful for where you are but you cannot be satisfied."

"The day that you are satisfied is the day when it's time to hang up your boots."

"I'm very happy here but I also have dreams and ambitions and having them makes me apply myself more

By Steve Madeley

here. If you're satisfied you're only going to give 95 or 96 per cent, but if you're striving for something and your ambitions are high you will push yourself to the very limit of your qualities and that's simply what I was saying."

Meanwhile, injured star Zoltan Gera has revealed how his faith is helping him cope with his season-ending knee problem.

The popular midfielder was sidelined just three games into his second stint at The Hawthorns by a ruptured cruciate ligament.

Rehabilitation

And the 32-year-old, who has begun his six-nine-month rehabilitation after successful surgery to repair the damage, said: "I'm a Christian and I believe God can help me."

"I've gone through lots of problems and I always deal with them with God's help. That's the main thing."

"I'm just looking forward to getting fit again because I can see myself on the pitch already."

And Gera has revealed how the birth of his second child, son Jonatan, just two days after his injury, helped put the problem into per-

spective. "On Saturday I got injured, on Sunday I had the scan and they said I needed an operation," he said.

"On Sunday evening we went to the hospital and on Monday morning the baby was born. I was a bit down on Saturday and Sunday, and on Monday I was so happy and excited. It's great at anytime to have a baby - but especially now when I have a serious injury."

The Hungarian international has praised the work of the Baggies medical staff, who have begun work on getting him fit again with the help of the club's new hydrotherapy facilities.

"Everyone from the head coach to the players have given me lots of positive words and that's important for a player," he said.

"The physios did a great job with my ankle and they will again."

"I'm in good hands so I don't worry about the recovery. I'm just very happy to be back in the club."

"In the two home games I played the fans gave me a very good reception and I feel the support from the supporters through this injury. I just want to say thank you to them and hopefully I can play as soon as possible for the team."



Midfielder James Morrison celebrates his stunning strike in the win at Blackburn

'Mad Max' hopes for title shot after win

MAX MAXWELL got back to winning ways and secured the English title shot he hopes will serve as bait for new British champion Brian Rose.

The Birmingham fighter recovered from his controversial one-round defeat to Tom Doran, who was down in the same fight, with a deserved points win over Bristol-based tough Turk Rocky Chakir.

The decision at the Holiday Inn on Tuesday came exactly seven months after the Doran defeat.

Maxwell's next fight will also be in Birmingham, at the New Bingley Hall on March 2.

The English light middleweight title, vacated by Rose after he became British champion earlier this month, will be on the line in the Jamaican-born Brummie's first shot at a national crown.

It could now be a Battle of Brum between Maxwell and the undefeated Nasser Al Harbi with 'Mad Max,' who knocked out Rose in May of last year, hoping a British title shot will follow.

He said: "I don't want to blow my own trumpet but I think I deserve a shot at something."

"I have come on a lot and have boxed most of the top 10 light middleweights in the country."

The undercard of the four-fight dinner show marked the debut of Birmingham's Craig Cunningham, formerly of Warley ABC, who made his bow at middleweight against journeyman Duncan Cottier.

Cottier had only been stopped five times in 75 fights but Cunningham was a 40-36 winner.

Glover fight is upgraded

TIPTON'S Lee Glover has seen his contest with former Prizefighter rival Ian Bailey upgraded to a title fight.

Glover was due to face Bailey in a six-rounder on Tuesday at the Holiday Inn in Birmingham.

But now the 'Tipton Slasher' will take on Bailey in a 10-round fight at Walsall Town Hall on February 25.

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Cousins Winter Sale starts on Boxing Day at 9am. Be early to take advantage of **EXTRA DISCOUNTS OFF ALL SALE PRICES** throughout the stores, plus many one-off deals and limited stock availability. **Be early for the best buys, limited stocks!**



From left to right:
Edward, Matt, John and Thomas Shotton

Following on from the success of their Stock Clearance Event in November, the directors of Cousins are continuing their strategy of buying-up much of their suppliers' surplus stock, allowing them to offer unprecedented low sale prices, with massive savings of up to 70% right across their fantastic range of brand name furniture, carpets, beds and homewares.

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Commenting on the company's strategy, Managing Director, John Shotton said: "As a result of our

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As well as purchasing vast quantities of surplus stock, Cousins have also used this opportunity to negotiate lower ongoing buying prices from their suppliers whether for special one-off customer orders or forward ordered bulk stock deals. Either way this translates into unprecedented extra discounts off all sale prices.

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Every item throughout the stores has been further reduced with an Extra discount off their sale price, including all brand names and the many new collections that have just arrived for 2012.

As you'd expect Cousins' Winter Sale is showcasing many new styles and ideas from the world's leading designers. These collections exude the highest levels of innovation, inspiration and craftsmanship.

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The fact that over 60% of Cousins customers are either recommended or repeat purchases and that we regularly deliver to London, Cornwall and the Lake District is true testament to this. Check out the testimonials online where 97% of all customers independently rate our products as good/excellent and 90% our service (Feefo 9th December)

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With limited quantities and many one-off deals, you'll have to hurry though. The Winter Sale starts at 9am on Boxing Day (one hour earlier than usual) and they're expecting it to be one of our busiest days of the year.

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Robert Shotton



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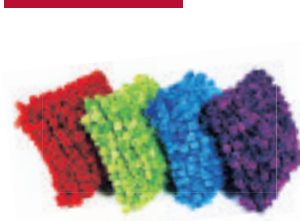
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